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THE MAKING OF HUMANITY

THE MAKING OF HUMANITY

BY

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The Making of Humanity

CHAPTER I

PROGRESS AS FACT AND VALUE

I

THE DISCOVERY OF MAN

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κοὐδὲν ἀνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει
Antigone

THE intellectual revolution of the nineteenth century has transformed our conceptions of human history in much the same manner as the intellectual revolution of the seventeenth century changed our view of the cosmic universe. Like the Ptolemaic world our notions concerning the career of our race were miserably stunted, dingy, and mean The date 4004 B C was gravely accepted as the boundary of our retrospect , and long before reaching back to it the 'conventional fable' of history which, like the primitive epic whence it evolved, was chiefly concerned with racial, dynastic, and religious edification, faded into pure legend and mythology As when awakening science crashed through the tinsel vaults of puerile cosmologies, discovering the sun-strewn infinities amid which speeds our quivering earth-speck, so have the mists of legend lifted before her radiant progress, and it is given us to view the panorama of man's long and wonderful career in something of its natural perspective and proportion. Those ages once peopled with the myths and monsters of fable now show down the vista of teeming nations our own culture in the making, Europa that is to be, borne on forked-prowed Cretan galleys that seam, from

Nile-land and Ægean shores to Italy and Spain, the midland sea; jingling donkey-caravans that bear from the Twin Rivers, through the realm of the pig-tailed Hittite to the Euxine and Phrygia, the freight of a culture that reaches back beyond Archbishop Usher's date of the creation of the world. Ten thousand years before it came westering to Sumer we see the Magdalenians decking with frescoes and inscriptions their temple-caves, and weirdly dancing their rites accoutred in the masks of beasts, prototypes of those which Attic maidens shall don at the shrine of Artemis Brauronia, and of those through whose brazen mouths shall be chanted the lapidary lines of Æschylean choruses Yet even that savage culture of the last ice-age is but a mature fruit, the culmination of successive eras of slow growth computed by hundreds of thousands of years. Beyond stretch æons of time as unseizable to our imagination as are the distances of sidereal space

Transferred to the open vastness of those expanses the entire perspective, the meaning itself of history is changed. As in the geocentric theory, our view was not merely untrue, it was an accurate inversion of the truth. The career of mankind was currently conceived as one of continuous degeneration. Savages, instead of being regarded as surviving vestiges representing the condition of primitive humanity, were held to be the descendants of once noble and civilized races who had, by an inevitable law of human nature, lapsed into miserable degradation The Past was the repository of virtue and lost wisdom, it stood exalted in proportion to its antiquity above the puny Present, and the chief function of historical study was to hold up the excellences of our distant forbears as a paradigm to a waning age.

It is only a matter of a generation or two since those quaint views became untenable, and the dust of the last rear-guard actions is hardly laid. In his great work on *Primitive Culture* Sir Edward Tylor devotes a lengthy chapter to the considerate and painstaking refutation of the 'theory of degeneration,' and he has in the course of it occasion to cite long and hot passages in its defence from distinguished contemporaries, and

indignant onslaughts on the hypothesis of progress. Tylor's book was published in 1871. One of the noblest and most fearless thinkers of the last century, Carlyle, feeling keenly, as do all earnest and generous spirits, the faults and follies of the world about him, could perceive no higher aspiration to be set as an ideal before the Present than the emulation and imitation of the Past. And the past period which he selected as a model and exemplar was the thirteenth century! The notion of progress, of the "perfectibility of the species" was the butt of his most scornful sarcasms.

It is now currently known that the human world has risen out of barbarism and animality, that its dawn light shines on no heroic or golden ages, but on nightmares to make us scream in our sleep. During an incalculable period of time our ancestors were savages ruder and more brutal than the primitive races whose fast dying remnants still survive. Man's life was, as Hobbes surmised, "poor, nasty, brutish, short" The first pathetic totterings of culture were only attained through a tale of ages compared to which the whole name-and-date period is of negligible amplitude Fire, cattle-herding, weaving, pottery, tillage, the metals, horse-taming, and the going down to the sea in ships of men with hearts of treble brass, were world-shaking discoveries and adventures which, at millenniums of interval, commoved a bewildered humanity which found itself raised one giddy step above the brute. Those tremendous revolutions were crowded in the last few hundred thousand years. During the greater part of its existence the human race has roamed the wild earth among other animal herds, differing but little from them in its mode of life, driven by the same exigencies and pressures, by climate, by cold and drought Its mentality was not essentially different, the first faint glimmers of thought oppressed almost as much as they aided it, man was urged by the self-same impulses as all other animality which he was only imperceptibly transcending.

The notion of human progress, but dimly and fugitively prefigured here and there by the thought of various ages, that conception which the doctrinaire

enthusiasm of the eighteenth century, the faith of a Condorcet under the very knife of the guillotine, had proclaimed in the same abstract and imaginative manner as it drew fancy-pictures of 'primitive society,' has from the domain of philosophizing theory and pious opinion passed to that of scientific description. From the accumulated results of biology and geology, from the archeological exhumation of the past, from prehistorical and anthropological research, the speculative doctrine emerges—whatever disputes and castigations may gather round its interpretation—as a witnessed, concrete fact A fact which, instead of being the expression of a faith, is itself the source of a new faith and inspiration

For the first shudder of false shame which, as is usual in such cases, greeted the blunt disclosure of our origins, gives place to a feeling of wonder and exultation, of tenderness and inspiring hope, as in the path pursued by the human race from its lowly emergence we perceive the unceasing march of a continuous and marvellous growth, age-long indeed if measured by our common standards of time, but in truth more rapid and mighty in its achievements than the whole foregoing evolution of animal life The entire world of human things as it exists to-day, with its marvels and its powers, its good—and also its evil,—is the product of that evolution Its elements did not make their appearance at one bound, they did not come to man from another sphere, nor were they found by him as an integral part of the world in which he was born , but developed by little and little from the crudest beginnings And since thus all human things are man-made, since our world is the outgrowth of the most primitive and rudest human communities, every step of the intervening progress is the fruit of human effort, of human labour, and human courage , every inch of that advance has been wrested by man at the cost of suffering and devotion, and against a mountain-mass of difficulties, the overwhelming nature of which only a close analysis can reveal, from the dark chaos of brutality and nescience

'Man is descended from the monkeys ' That used to be, and is still in some quarters, the uproariously

droll anticlimax of the law of evolution—apart from being the one supernatant statement of that fundamental law of life which had reached the apprehension of the semi-educated multitude. It was the manifest *reductio ad absurdum*, and the most irresistible pelting weapon for Oxford bishops wherewith to slay the nascent revelation with ridicule Even the most ardent protagonists of the new doctrine felt somewhat embarrassed by a fact insusceptible of being stated without a broad grin, or at least a humorous twinkle of the eye How could one speak of monkey ancestors with beseeming gravity? It behoved us to have recourse to all manner of shame-faced, apologetic circumlocutions, to devise euphemistic phrases in order to refer to the fact with some show of decorum. 'Man, of course, is not descended from the monkeys—not, at least, from monkeys now living, obviously—but from extinct pithecoid progenitors , not from any ape, but from some anthropoid common ancestor of living primates and living men ' An intractable, uncouth, grotesque fact Such are the fruits of materialistic science, destructive of all poetry and sentiment

Well ! speaking with strictest accuracy, there is not in the entire universe of known facts one so purely venerable, so wholly sublime in its grandeur as that same grotesque fact Not the Kantian wonders, not the starry heavens, not the conscience The starry heavens—that other rude blow of unsentimental science to human dignity—are merely big The conscience, in so far as it is not a convenient name for prejudices, is but a fragment of the larger portent. The self-creation of the progeny of the ape, by the sole operation of his inherent qualities and powers, by the unfolding of what was in him, the ape, the brute, the beast, the savage, unaided by any external power, in the face of the buffets of hostile nature, of the intractabilities of his own constitution, into MAN, the demi-god. the thinker, the deviser, the aspirer after truth and justice, greater in his achievements and his ideals than all the gods he is capable of conceiving—if there is a fact before which we may truly bow in solemn reverence and silent wonder, it is that.

The marvel of man, the essential transcendency of the 'thinking reed' over all the patible qualities of what he contemplates, is among the cheap commonplaces of meditative thought But that supreme prodigy is itself removed to an immeasurably loftier plane of sublimity, when it is perceived no longer as a bestowed and privileged endowment, as a stolen fire, an illapse from a transhuman sphere , but as the achievement, the built-up product, the slowly, painfully, and toilsomely wrought creation of his own effort The transcendency of the human world and of human worth is not merely the privilege of man, it is his work To the sublimity of the thing itself is superadded the far greater sublimity of its production Those qualities and powers, those devotions, those enthusiasms, those heroisms, those aspirations, the sanctities of justice and self-sacrifice, that mighty creative spirit which has brought forth art, poetry, eloquence, Parthenons, Odysseys, Giocondas, Hamlets, that masterful intellect which sits over the world, which harnesses its forces and transforms it, that sacred flame which rises above life and defies death, defies wrong, defies falsehood, wills right, is loyal to truth—all that man is, has been, and aspires to be, is the accumulated product of a quality and power inherent in himself, which has wrought from the lowest and dimmest rudiments, pursued unrestingly "the gradual paths of an aspiring change," built and created that dignity which sets him on equal terms with all the sublimities of the universe In the pathetic life of that ill-favoured Caliban with the ungainly stooping form, the muzzle of a gorilla, the melancholy light in his eyes, lacking the force and dignity of the lion or the grace of the gazelle, there was that which, even as a rudiment, wrought and brought forth such fruits He was a little lower than the beasts, he made himself a little higher than the angels.

And the same indwelling power that has brought about that prodigy, that has created man out of the brute, did not stop there It has never ceased to be at work, to pursue the same creative task, to soar upwards on the same path of transfiguring, exsurgent evolution. It dwells in man, it is at work in him to-day The wonder of

it is no less great in one part of the creative process than in any other, in the birth of modern civilization than in the birth of man That the brute-ape should be the father of thinking man, that is a prodigy , that the gibbering savage should be the father of the Periklean Greek, that also is a prodigy , that the tenth century should be the father of the twentieth century, that is no less a prodigy.

We are wont at times to think what a puny, ineffectual thing is human life, so fretful and achieving so little, ending in disillusion and disappointment, and shame and regret, and work left undone, "a tale told by an idiot " Well! behold the aggregate result, the accumulated deposit, the net resultant of the lowliest and humblest human lives! That is the actual cash value in the universe of those fretful, ineffectual careers— the human world risen out of chaos

II

CHANGE, EVOLUTION, PROGRESS

Writ large though it be in the story of the race, the law of human evolution, of progress, has by no means yet established itself as a truism in current thought far from it It is still, on the contrary, an acutely controversial conception , one, indeed, which the great bulk of current opinion, of current literature is disposed to gainsay, to raise innumerable doubts about The theory of degeneration,' in its old form at least, can, it is true, no longer be upheld , it has perforce tacitly passed into limbo From Cro-Magnon to modern man is clearly and beyond all dispute a process of active evolution, of progress, whatever conception we may

attach to the term. Yet the acceptance of the fact as a continuous process, as a law operating throughout historic times, from the age of Greece to the present day—the old myopic range of our historic vision—is qualified and hedged with all manner of reluctance, of doubt, of objection, of downright denial.

The grounds of that scepticism are numerous and diverse, rooted, some of them, deep in our very nature, some in obscuring circumstances by which the unity and form of the process is disguised, some in difficulties of thought inherent in the conception itself.

•

Are we entitled to pronounce any process progressive? Change we know, evolution we know—more or less, but progress? When Heracleitos proclaimed the universal flux, that all things everlastingly change and become, that we do not bathe twice in the same river of experience, he by no means enunciated a law of evolution, still less did he testify to progress. Even when to the perception of mere change we have added the further fact that each successive phase of it is determined by the foregoing, that the forms of life in particular are thus derived, evolved one from the other in continuous sequence, we have, to be sure, gone a step beyond the recognition of mere change and perceived a new feature of it in the process of evolution, but we have not discovered progress.

Clearly is not that a valuation which we impose upon the stream of change, declaring it to be good? "Evolution," it has been said, "is a fact, progress is a feeling." What title have we to that dynamic optimism pronouncing that whatsoever becomes, becomes better? Is not that but a way of saying that our own particular manner and outlook are the standard of all excellence, and that what leads thereto is therefore a process of bettering?

Let us suppose that in its infancy our race had cherished a profound and unreasonable respect for human life, and that the various changes since that childlike state had eventually led to this, among other results,—

that modern man had come to discover the delicate flavour and excellent nutritive qualities of human flesh, and had become an enthusiastic cannibal. We may imagine that, under those circumstances, we should look down with considerable pity upon the benighted barbarians who remained ignorant of the most excellent and readily available food; upon our forefathers who were insufficiently intelligent to appreciate to the full the advice of that man of genius, Dean Swift, and to solve in a fundamental manner the problem of poverty and the Irish question, while throwing open at the same time new sources of enjoyment and eupepsia; and we should point with demure pride to the growth of refined taste and discrimination as a clear index of our progress.

That the notion of progress is an æsthetic, an ethical valuation, that when we pronounce man to be higher than the hog, the thinker better than the savage, the just man better than the cannibal, we are overstepping the mere transcription of fact and passing a moral judgment, is hardly to be disputed. But the further question presents itself, What is the source and significance of all valuations? what, if any, is their criterion?

Imagine that you have before you the first gelatinous, quivering thing that separated out of the inorganic world and became *living*. Hard put to it though you might be to define wherein its livingness consisted, you would at once recognize in its behaviour the marks and symptoms of that state. It eats, increases, multiplies. In the configuration of its energy there are those dispositions, those tendencies or what-not, to do certain things that all living creatures are busily employed in doing. Or rather, are not all those acts of life, those strivings after its maintenance and continuance, varied in accordance with the conditions against which it contends and of which it takes avail, but manifestations of one fundamental, though unknown, disposition of living stuff, which constitutes its very livingness? The diversity of the acts, limited enough in so simple a creature, arises

partly from the analytic quality of our perception, partly from the diversity of stimuli which call them forth. They are one and all directed to one end, life, which by their failure would cease. On those and on other grounds it is more reasonable to regard them as arising out of a single disposition, than as a bundle of separate 'faculties' or properties existing alongside one another, a mosaic of independent characters. But that gelatinous speck does more than manifest those acts of life which you observe, or those more recondite and complex bio-chemical manifestations which go along with them The same disposition of energy which does those things in response to the action upon it of the surrounding medium, does more You are in a position to cast your glance up and down the perspective of ages, and, watching that spot of slime, what do you see? You see it prodigiously budding and changing, and, as in an Arabian tale, assuming varied and strange forms, changing into a hydra and a sea-squirt, into a fish and into a serpent, into a mole and into a squirrel, until at last it fantastically changes into *you*

There is assuredly more in that strange display of metamorphosis than a mere orgy of change It is, as much as hunger, procreation, and the other phenomena of life, a function and character of its being, a manifestation of that disposition wherein life consists That behaviour of living stuff suggests indeed that, even as its constitution impels it to feed and increase, so it likewise impels it to extend and build up its organization in view of some intrinsic need no less imperative than hunger Against that view, however, stands the fact that the amœba still exists, that not all life has evolved, that after the inconceivable lapse of time since it began its primitive forms survive unchanged, that, in its outline at least, the entire series in its various stages is represented in coexistent forms at the present time In order to account for that unchanged survival we must suppose that only in an infinitesimal proportion of living things has the process of evolution taken place, that the majority remained to all intents stationary Thus that faculty of development has only come into

operation as it was elicited by favouring conditions which brought into play the intrinsic tendency of life to such a process.

And such a tendency, such a power we know indeed to be inherent in all life. To exist at all a living thing must be *adapted* to the exigencies of an environment often difficult and hostile Its energizing, what it does, must be done in harmony with conditions imposed upon it by the external medium which exacts conformity from every act of life Feeding, breathing, breeding, not only achieve their end, but do so in relation to ambient facts with which they must accord , to adapt its acts is as much a function of life as to perform them ; to achieve that adaptation is as much a part of its essential mechanism as to oxygenate its tissues, as much an impulse of it as hunger and love.

The amœba, since it exists, is as much adapted as man to external conditions But with every adaptive change effected in response to the necessity imposed or the opportunity offered by those changing conditions, an increase in life's powers is brought about , the field of its faculties, the freedom of their play is extended The fin, the limb and the claw are more widely efficient than the pseudopod, the eye than the pigment patch or actinic skin, the neuron than the irritability of protoplasm The effect is cumulative The difference between you and the amœba on the stage of your microscope is more than a mere difference in adaptation, although it is in fact an aspect and a consequence of that adjustment Like the amœba, you contrive to exist in conformity with imposed conditions , but you do far more, you control those conditions , your activities are immeasurably emancipated, and their range is extended out of all knowledge Most of the difficulties against which life in the animalcule struggles and contends are for you transcended. Life in you has conquered a thousand new environments, proceeded to new spheres of action , the scope and form of its primitive needs, its possibilities and goals have been expanded and transfigured Such has been the constant character of the process throughout the series of change, throughout

evolution Whether it be essentially the outcome of an innate disposition to development, or the summation of successive adaptations, the result is in effect the same It is not change alone, it is more even than cumulative change, it is change in the direction of a constant achievement, the increase of the power of life to control the conditions of its activity, and the consequent extension of their scope and of that power

It is, at a superficial glance, as though from the first, life had tended to a pre-appointed goal. But that teleological notion is not in accordance with facts The process issues in the vertebrates, in the mammals, in humanity, but does not make directly and deliberately towards them Scores, hundreds of utterly different types and lines of development have been tried before evolution hit upon the vertebrate organization or the mammalian brain The form of the process is not a single line, a rising curve, but a thickly congested, wide-spreading, straggling, branching tree, in which, for one crowning top of success, there are thousands of withering boughs, thousands of blind alleys of partial success and failure There is no forecast or forethought in the lower stages or at any stage of the series of what is to prove its crowning consummation The protozoon was not predestined, the progress of evolution has not been pre-ordained and planned, but groping and fumbling

Human progress is human evolution Between it and the development of organic life there are, as we shall see, differences deep in their nature and momentous in their import, but progress is nevertheless the continuation of the same vital process, its driving force, its ultimate tendencies are the same. The disposition of living energy which is the moving power of life's reaction to ambient conditions in the protozoon, is likewise operative in man, who is, after all, biologically considered, but an aggregate of protozoa. In their infinite variety and complexities, subtleties and sublimations, human behaviour, thought, history, achievements, and endeavours, have had no other spring than the

original and primordial tendencies which actuate the amœba. Throughout evolution no new impulse has been created; the particularized form in which impulse is manifested is alone susceptible of change For what in life we call, at a loss for a better word, 'tendency,' 'impulse,' has no specific form It only becomes specified into desire tending to a concrete goal at the call of experience of actual relation, through the development of sensation, of cognitive perception and concepts. It is the motley actuality of that cognitive experience which, 'like a dome of many coloured glass, stains the white radiance' of life's immutable eternity No such particularized form exists in the impulse itself, that is why no idea, no concept, no thought, can ever be innate and physiologically transmitted The hunger of Tantalus wears the shape of the overhanging apple to which his desire is drawn, but there is in the fundamental constitution of life no desire for apples or for diatoms, no hunger even, or any of those appetences which psychologists classify as 'primary impulses', nothing beyond the unspecified reaching out of its energy towards its continuance, exercise, and expansion The desires that move you or any human being, whether for scientific accuracy or Beethoven symphonies, for social reform or rubber shares, for Satsuma ware or philosophy, are but the shape and body which the transformations of cognitive powers give to the original impulses—or say rather the original impulse, which actuates the amœba and all life.

The direction of human evolution and the measure of its results are no less identical with those of life itself than the force that moves them For man, as for all life, success, development, progress means increased control over the conditions of life That is obvious enough in the case of mechanical progress, in the development of his mastery over the forces of nature, from eolithic flints to Handley-Page planes But to the same ultimate object all human activities in whatsoever aspect, whether as art, thought, religion, ethics, politics, are no less definitely directed. By the im-

measurable expansion of his cognitive powers, the conditioning environment of life has in man been unfolded and diversified into infinite complexities. That environment was for rudimentary life comprised in the physical and chemical qualities of the fluid it bathed in. To human life it has come to mean the universe and its problems, the human world and all the new forces which it has created, the multiform needs and desires into which, in man, the impulses of life have been objectified and broken up. And to the conditions of man's development as an individual has been added the most formidable of all tasks: the creation of a new type of polyzoic organism, humanity, involving the most complex adjustments of individual development to that of the larger unit. Control over the material conditions of existence is thus but a small fraction of the task imposed upon man by the nature of his powers and the condition of their action. It includes *all* the conditions of human life in their infinite and tangled diversity; it is as complex and subtly various in its aspects as is human life itself. It includes all that man has ever aspired to or desired, all that towards which his heart and mind have tended, every secret of his wistfulness, every form of his dreams, every ideal and every faith, every loadstar, every flame of his life. It is towards power of free development, power of joy, power of action, power of feeling, power of creation, power of understanding, power of co-ordination and justice, that human life is perpetually reaching out.

Thus it is that progress is so varied, so complex, so elusive a thing, and that it is so commonly obscured and misunderstood, because we see in it so many mingled forms, so many clashing, seemingly inconsistent tendencies. It includes the ideals of fifth-century Greece and those of twentieth-century America, of ages of dream and of ages of science, of intellectual and of material power, of hedonism and of self-sacrifice. Those Protean aspirations and appetences not only contend with one another, they live under the perpetual strain of the test of adaptation, of harmony with the actual facts of the universe and of life. So that there is an

evolution, as it were, within an evolution, a struggle for existence among principles, ideas, desires, and thoughts.

Hence may we perceive the fallacious futility of those endeavours to define the determinate nature and quality wherein consists the excellence of any phase in the process of human progress above the foregoing, of those descriptions of it as a growth in knowledge, or material power, or refinement, or morality, by which the particular angle of view of the theorist rather than any character of the process is illustrated Any such definition is necessarily quite artificial Every such form and character is but a facet of human progress which includes them all, and proceeds now in one direction, now in another, developing in one phase according to one type and ideal, and in another phase according to a different and even wholly opposite type Yet those diverse and contradictory ideals all constitute progress in so far as they extend in one direction or the other the power of human life to control its conditions They continue embodied in the growing whole, a part of its living power It not unfrequently happens in the course of the process that some quality appears to become lost, a deterioration in some particular aspect takes place, thus offering occasion for misleading comparisons which regard that one aspect only But, like the initial sacrifices incident upon the inception of some great enterprise, they are only incurred to be repaid a hundredfold, to reappear with fuller power upon a higher plane

Human progress does not, any more than does organic evolution, lead along a direct line to a teleologically pre-appointed goal In the one case as in the other the path of development has been a halting and groping one, and any purposive ends have been at most short-sighted Failure has been as common as achievement, so that the path of progress is strewn with tragic ruins It has only been achieved by successive trials and errors, errors for the most part wedged at the very foundations of man's successive structures, so that their rectification has involved wholesale rasing and reconstruction Thus we see human progress commonly proceeding by the

blotting out of civilizations, by the destruction and wreck of worlds.

The old 'philosophies of history,' which were concerned with the ideas of states, of nations, rather than of humanity, dwelt chiefly upon the rise and fall of successive civilizations, the growth and decay of empires, the ebb and flow of culture. Contemporary thought is similarly obsessed with the conception of 'cycles' of civilization. It is customary, since the days of Vico, to apply to the phenomenon the analogy of an individual life, and to describe the rapid expansion as a manifestation of youthful vitality and the process of decay as one of exhaustion and senility. But those terms are in this connection no more than empty and meaningless 'blessed words.' They signify nothing. There is no ground or indication for the suggestion of any analogy between the life of a 'race' and that of an individual—unless on the theory that individual ageing consists in a gradual clogging of the system by the accumulation of its own waste-products and excretions. But animal races do not perish through 'senility,' but through failure of their means of adaptation to cope with changing conditions and the competition of more efficiently adapted races. Human races and societies have constantly renewed their evolutionary powers and taken their place in the van of progress, after their 'senile decay' had been confidently diagnosed. The ife of a society as such—that is the only point of he simile of senility—depends upon the free action of ts excretory functions, upon its power of casting off he obsolete, the false and the effete.

Every form of human organization and culture that as hitherto existed represents but a partial and unerfect adaptation to the imposed conditions. It thrives, evelops in spite of inadaptations; but the further it roceeds the more heavily does the congenital handicap ll upon the possibilities of development. Hence a me comes when either those inadaptations, those errors, ose defects, those 'germs of decay' of our philophical historians, must be shed, or that phase of growth me to an end. The society must be remodelled either

by internal or by external action, and the Penelopean web is perpetually cast anew.

Those crises are a necessary preparation for renewed and more effective advance Progress requires that things should occasionally be thrown into the melting-pot. Even more than the organic process human evolution requires the casting off of effete products and obsolete structures as much as the building up of new ones; the one process is as much of the essence of progress as is the other Those cataclysms which seem to have plunged the world back into chaos, the barbaric invasions, the wars which have put out the light of the world, threatened to wipe away all, those set-backs, those disasters, have invariably served the ultimate purpose of progress The law of the race, which avails itself of both storm and sunlight, works through all accidents, turns catastrophes to account, so that they are so fruitful of good, destroying what needs destruction, freeing what is imperishable, that some have even been deluded into calling them desirable and necessary medicines

But—and it is this that stamps the whole process and makes it possible—nothing of the achieved conquests of human development is ever lost Time does not devour its children Civilizations, not civilization, are destroyed That which is unadapted perishes, that which is adapted is preserved Trample out Minoan culture, it shoots up again in thousandfold splendour in the glory of Greece, crush out Greece, the whole world is fertilized, give the Roman world up to the fury of barbarian hordes, and the outcome is Modern Europe. We see one race stepping into another's place in the van of the march, but nothing of the continuous inheritance is lost Every treading down of the seed results in a harvest richer than the last Chaldæan, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, European, bear the torch in turn, but the lampadophoria of human progress is continuous. In the progress of evolution races and nations count for no more than do individuals Like individuals, races, empires, civilizations pass away, but humanity proceeds onward The issue is human

advance as a whole, and as it moves we see the separate currents tending more and more to fuse into broader confluent streams For progress is marked not by forward motion only, but by an ever increasing expansion, continuously tending towards the inclusion of the entire race within the widening circles of an organized correlated growth, towards the creation not of brilliant civilizations and pre-eminent cultures, but of a greater and higher humanity.

III

PROGRESS AS VALUE

To the question, By what title do we dub that evolution *progress*? thus assigning an æsthetic, an ethical value to its procedure, declaring it to be *good*, to be a process of betterment, the answer is that such a valuation is that of life itself, and that there exists no other ground or significance for any values Of all such, good, bad, high, low, noble, base, life itself, life alone is the sole criterion and measure The realization of life's intrinsic impulses constitutes good, its failures evil Whatsoever promotes that realization, the efficiency of the expansion of life's control, is good, whatsoever frustrates and vitiates it is bad That is the only meaning, the only foundation in fact of those values, of all values Apart from such meaning they stand as empty words destitute of all content

Life itself you may say, may be a colossal atrocity, a deception, a gigantic blunder When you say so, kindly observe that you are placing your judgment-seat at some unknown, undefined, and wholly imaginary point *outside* life itself. And the meaning of the judg-

ment you pass is as utterly vacuous as that of the one-time thinkers who, crazed with metaphysics, pretended to sit outside all relations and conditions, and discoursed of the Absolute and the Unconditioned, of the thing-in-itself divested of its 'attributes' You are at liberty to repudiate all values, to score the words good, bad, high, low out of your vocabulary—though, while you live, you cannot dispense with *using* those values every second of your active existence, but if you use the words at all you can only validly do so by reference to the significance which life itself in its immutable tendencies has assigned to them When, as is constantly done, the whole worth and achievement of human evolution are repudiated, when a Nordau or a Carpenter denounces civilization as an artificial disease and advocates a return to more natural conditions,' that attitude is not so much one of rebellion against 'civilization' as against life

We are not happy Modern man is confronted with difficulties and problems far more distracting and formidable than ever did or could trouble primitive man To us the life-problems of the latter appear enviably simple, there are for us sources of anguish and despair, *lachrymæ rerum*, which to our savage ancestors were non-existent and would have been quite incomprehensible That is precisely because we have transcended the world of conditions in which they moved, because the field of our endeavours is transferred to new and immensely enlarged spheres, where, as all powers do, they necessarily meet with new oppositions, new entangled complexities, obstacles and defeats That is the penalty of all progress Did we escape it we should have a certain sign that our growth was arrested, that in us the forces of life were dying out With the growth and expansion of every capacity is likewise developed the capacity for pain, but in spite of the price life struggles for the prize And the disciples of Rousseau who would persuade us to walk on all fours would probably be the first hastily to decline to change places, mentally and materially, with an idyllic South-Sea cannibal

If we take 'happiness' as the criterion of human values, why should we stop at the 'natural conditions' of savage life? On that criterion not only must the savage be placed above civilized man, but also the hog above the savage, the amœba, doubtless, above the hog The non-existent must, to be strictly consistent, be placed above every form of struggling, aspiring existence The logical goal of the repudiators of human progress is not Tahiti, but Nirvana.

The divine discontent which impeaches and condemns the present, and which is in its rarer creative aspect the very stimulus of progress, is in its commoner inveterate form, as a trait of human lassitude, the *laus temporis acti* which tricks out the past in the hues of its own wistful pessimism, filtering away its unsightliness and preserving only its mellow glamour and charm The actual present grips us in every tender and irritable nerve, has us on edge, is full of care and annoyance, of tragedy and ugliness We need at times all our fortitude to bear with it, to stand up to the daily strain and pressure, at every step we are ready to succumb, to blaspheme life, the world, the present actual

Was not the Past, the Past that we may with delightful and refreshing relief contemplate detachedly, setting and composing our picture of it with tasteful choice, the Past that leaves us alone, that does not tug and nag at us, and irritate our susceptible nerves— was not the Past better? The illusion is embodied in the very substance of our Promethean clay slaked in the water of Lethe, it is rooted in the deepest nature of life itself But even the dimmest critical ray in the light under which we envisage past history should suffice to dispel it It is all very well to imagine how we should enjoy and appreciate, and be vastly interested in a Cook's tour through time in a machine of Mr H G Wells's invention, provided with all our present intellectual luggage and knowledge and interests But actually to transfer ourselves back, mind and body, into any of those picturesque pleasure resorts of our

historical fancy would be no Cook's tour, but an experience somewhat fuller of the doubts, uncertainties, cares and anxieties, and problems, and ignorances of which we complain than even the troublesome present. Not only would the picturesque dirt and squalor of life put even our tourist's good nature to a severe strain, but we should find that for us the whole conditions of life would be positively intolerable

In what period of the Past shall we seek refuge from the harrying present? Where betake ourselves in our search for the world of our choice?

Greece, the Athens of Perikles, the Acropolis, the groves of Academe?—As we enter the unpaved lanes of the dirty little Levantine town we are blinded with dust Our gorge rises as we pick our way through the scattered refuse, and the smells of frying oil are wafted to our nostrils from the booths where fly-covered strings of onions are hanging in the sun In the square, low hovels with their dunghill heaped by the fig-tree at the side, we shall find no home, no comfort, old Euripides, who lives like a troglodyte in his cave over at Salamis, fuming there with disgust at a desolating world, is considerably better housed than most Athenians And existence is dreadfully uncertain, we never know when we may get ourselves into trouble, be exiled or presented with a cup of hemlock Those immortal products of Greece, those Æschylean plays, and Platonic dialogues, that Parthenon, those Pheidian figures, that thought, that art, that poetry, whose pacifying serenity seems to breathe into us the spirit of a divine calm, were all wrought under conditions differing little from a Reign of Terror, that serenity is the product of Bolshevist conditions. And war is always at the very gates with its imminent possibilities War was but yesterday at our own gates, the most horrible war, we have got used to repeating, in all history. Yes, but we did not contemplate that even Hun *Schrecklichkeit* would go so far as to 'andrapodize' London in the event of a German conquest That meant putting every man, old or young, to the sword and selling the women and

children into slavery That is the way in which Melos and Scione and Histiæa and other Greek towns were treated by the Athenians, that is the way in which they calmly decided under the shadow of the Acropolis to treat Mytilene At best all were sold into slavery, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters separated and scattered in the markets of Delos and the brothels of the Levant That was the way in which those god-like Greeks of the Periklean age were in the habit of dealing with a captured Greek town The *Daily Mail* has not yet suggested that the savage Huns would behave quite like those fellow-citizens of Euripides and Plato

Shall we choose instead for our abode imperial Rome in the hey-day of that age of the Antonines which has been pronounced one of the most prosperous and happy in the history of mankind? The narrow, winding streets are not very safe even in broad daylight, thieves and pickpockets of every type swarm everywhere; and even plausible gentlemen with fingers covered with rings will be filching some trifle while they kiss your hand And at night it would be positively foolhardy to venture out without a goodly train of attendants well armed with clubs People disappear *spurlos*, and bands of bandits actually take possession of the city whenever a garrison drives them from the Pontine Marshes or the Vulturnus Here we have no war, we are enjoying the great *Pax Romana* But judging from all the vexatious, inquisitorial regulations and official pryings into our privacy, from the taxes on luxuries, and registrations, from the exorbitant prices of food, the downright famines whenever the precarious sea-transport fails, and the food-cards, it would really seem as if we had got back again under the regimen of an aggravated D O R A There is no privacy, and the secret service, the all-pervading system of spies and informants, of which there are some in every house, in every tavern, even under the best emperors, is a positive terrorism It is impossible to speak freely anywhere There is a unanimous lamentation on that score among all authors "It is impossible to think

or express oneself freely," says Tacitus, "One must not think of any innovation unless one wishes death," says Philostratus. "By showing any confidence to any one," says Epictetus, "the unwary fall into the traps of the soldiery An officer in mufti sits beside you and begins to criticize the emperor, you, in order to appear quite frank, say what you think, and the result is that you find yourself cast in prison and in irons"

Need we try the Dark Ages? We shall have occasion to see later what to think of them Or shall we cast our lot in resurrecting Europe, in the Florence of Dante, say? Dante does not speak well of it, on the whole distinctly does not recommend it The Rome, the Paris of the Renaissance, of Cellini, Tudor London when the shadow of the Tower and of the block lay over the life of every great one, and that of the gallows across that of every poor, appear equally to be places to be avoided

We come to the brink of the Modern World, to the seventeenth century Let us at once seek out the very centre of the new lights, the court of the Roi Soleil, which sets the tone of refinement and splendour to the whole world The drains, you must excuse, are out of order, and the gentlemen about here suffer from extensive attentions from their apothecaries the King, too, and the fine ladies of the Court are troubled with *pyorrhœa*, so that their breath is somewhat offensive, and as the ladies do not shave their heads like the men--well, one gets surprises People eat with their fingers, and the hat of Monsieur, which he wears at table, has got somewhat greasy at the brim from much saluting But you are getting impatient these are mere paltry details We are not concerned with them, it is freedom, intellectual liberty, good taste, the stimulus of a beautiful life and of high ideals which we seek Then, I think, we have come altogether to the wrong place What there is of free intellect is mostly to be found in the prisons of an omnipotent Ignorance and Intolerance, or is burning its manuscripts for fear of it, or is hiding in Holland

Our choice is getting limited There is not, I fear,

a single epoch which on closer acquaintance will not jar upon our susceptibilities and fill us with disgust and indignation, which, in fact, we of to-day could make shift to endure at all. Nay, how many of us would consent to step back even into that prim mid-Victorian world that lies almost within our memories?

The cheap scoffs levelled at 'progress' and 'civilization'—words vulgarized enough, it is true, and debased by the hawking eloquence of press and politics,—scorning them as flimsy veneers, external and superficial accretions obduced over a fixed and unredeemable thing termed human nature, would seem at the present moment to be barbed with hundredfold irony amid the paroxysm of all the forces of destruction, and the wreck and jeopardy of a world.

Wherefore was that martyrdom accepted? wherefore was the fight waged? Was it not precisely in defence of the heirloom of human progress and in the hope of a better world? Those forces of Bedlam have, together with a thousand other abuses and diseases, the cursed relics of the Past, existed, simmered, and fermented in our imperfectly realized humanity long before their material eruption. It is in one of the great climacteric crises of human evolution that we are living; a crisis none the less a part of the process of upward growth because it is, in the utmost violence of its destructive aspect, and with the most distracting and imperative sternness of its Sphynx riddles that it confronts us.

And now more urgently than ever does it behove us to understand to the utmost of our capacity the nature of that evolution whose laws shape the destinies of the human world. In that awful and sublime process, amid tragedies and horrors unspeakable, miseries untold, mire, sordidness, squalor, baseness unavowable, we see man—for all his faults and follies—making himself out of a brute into a demi-god. The obvious question thrusts itself upon us—How did he do it?

CHAPTER II

INTERPRETATIONS OF HISTORY

I

ENDOGENOUS THEORIES: MIND, RACE

THE answer to that question—well-nigh the most momentous to which thought can apply itself—is exceedingly simple, and so obvious that no profound penetration is needed to discover it. Yet, far from being a glaring and familiar truism, it has hardly even been definitely formulated with unequivocal clearness; the plain and direct answer appears, on the contrary, to have been studiously evaded; and we have, in its stead, an array of profound, elaborate, and circuitous explanations, a literature of theories and philosophies of history which have thoroughly succeeded in tangling and befogging the issue. There is probably no inquiry, the ultimate of metaphysics not excepted, where thought has shown so pathetically ineffectual and feeble.

The earlier attempts to view the mighty maze is not without a plan, when not merely identifying it with a pre-established providential scheme, as in the doctrine of Augustine and its later versions in Bossuet and Schlegel, were at one in viewing it as the detached unfolding of the mind of man, or of some aspect thereof, in segregated independence from the encompassing universe. In seeking a cause whereby a uniform interpretation might be placed upon events, they did not go beyond the mind itself, wholly ignoring the other term of the relation, the environing world of conditions amid which humanity is called upon to react. Those idealistic conceptions, variously seasoned with those of the Providential Scheme and of the Prussian State, have floated down the rarefied atmosphere of German philosophy from Kant, Lessing

and Schelling, to the transcendental unfolding of the Hegelian 'Idea' in the mistlands of the Unconditioned.

That calm disregard of the conditioning media of human development has its up-to-date counterpart—likewise of Germanic provenance—in the exaltation of the old barbaric conqueror's pride of 'race,' conceived as an endowment of immutable stability, as the supreme determinant in human history Ostentatiously arrayed in terminology obtrusively scientific, armed with cephalic indices, and cross-sections of hair, with Mendelian characters, and 'statistics of genius per square mile,' and supported with heavy artillery by the allied deification of 'heredity' to the exclusion of environment by Weismannic biology, the apostle of race proceeds to demonstrate that everything of value and every notable personality in the world have been the product of the particular race that claims his allegiance—Teutonic, Mediterranean, Nordic, as the case may be, that the Greeks, that Jesus, that Dante were Germans, or that the Vikings were Italians, that civilization has proceeded from north to south, or from south to north, is the result of purity of race, or of cross-fertilization of races. "Race is everything," "the search is at an end, here lie the grand causes"[1] It is the key to the interpretation of every historical fact The "quarrels between patrician and plebeian," for instance, obviously "arose from the existence in Rome, side by side, of two distinct and clashing races", "The splendid conquistadores of the New World," one is interested to hear, "were of Nordic type, but their pure stock did not long survive their new surroundings, and to-day they have vanished utterly After considering well these facts we shall not have to search further for the causes of the collapse of Spain"[2] Clearly that would be quite superfluous Flattering as it is to patriotic pride, the doctrine above all recommends itself by its labour-saving economy, which enables us to account for Greece by 'Greek genius,' for Rome by 'Roman ditto,' for England by 'the genius of the Anglo-Saxon race,' for monotheism

[1] Taine, *Hist of English Literature*

[2] Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, pp 139 and 174.

by the 'Semitic genius for religion,' in the same fundamental manner as Molière's doctor elucidated the 'dormitive virtue' of opium

'Race' or 'Heredity' is but the summation of ancestral reactions to past environments, and is only stable and persistent under altered conditions—as the inconvenient facts brushed aside by its protagonists indicate—in proportion to the depth of the original impressions, to the length of time during which they have operated, and to the relative force and duration of the new influences which tend to modify them. As everywhere else in the organic world, races separated from others in their development have become differentiated and have acquired distinct characters both physical and mental But, owing to the peculiar nature of the products of human evolution and of the manner of their transmission, the effects of a very partial segregation on the leading stocks of mankind are not comparable in magnitude or stability to those of segregation in the animal world

II

EXOGENOUS THEORIES GEOGRAPHICAL AND ECONOMIC DETERMINISM

A real sequence of cause and effect first becomes apprehensible when attention, instead of being centred on the mind and the race, is directed to the environment in relation to which they react and develop Buckle pointed out the relation between a people's history and the geographical conditions of its homeland While some of his illustrations were of Lamarckian crudity, he was, on the other hand, too moderate in his claims, for he confined that influence to the earlier stages of development. The direct and paramount relation between the geography of Greece of

Egypt, of Holland is obvious at a glance, the like holds good of every country and is by no means confined to any one period of growth Not only is the political development of England and of its free institutions, as was long ago pointed out by the old Whig theorists, the direct effect, not of any racial characteristic, but of England's insular position, which deprived centralized power of the pretext for permanent armaments and supremacy, but almost every peculiarity of English character is likewise traceable to the consequences of that circumstance History, as the followers of Ratzel and Demolins have with pardonable exaggeration declared, is a function of geography

But the determining action of the environment is much more intimate, pervasive, and far-reaching than that exercised on human relations by general geographical conditions The life of man depends in the last resort upon his bread and butter, and is conditioned by the way he obtains it The character of a community, and the course of its development, must needs vary in like manner, according as it depends for its sustenance upon agriculture, or commerce, or war But not only is the whole mode of life of a society thus determined by the source of its sustenance a new order of factors is set up by the various divisions of labour entailed in obtaining it Wealth and power tend to accumulate in the hands of certain classes, and conflicting sets of interests are thus established That new human environment in turn creates an order of influences which moulds the entire order of society And those very features of the mental world, the types of those ideas and ideals, fancifully supposed by metaphysical theorists to rule the whole process, and to soar far above sordid material conditions, are themselves subject to the determining influence of those conditions The conceptions, the notions, the prejudices, the standards of judgment and of conduct, the literature, the philosophy, the morality of the community, are shaped and coloured by the nature of the established ruling interests which the material conditions have determined

Those principles, first definitely formulated by Marx and Engels, by recognizing in the manifold conditions of the environment the true determinant of differentiation, mark the advent of a scientific method of historical interpretation. The materialistic or economic theory of history has been termed by its admirers one of the greatest discoveries of the nineteenth century, and, what is much more significant, its influence, in spite of its overt and reckless defiance of the tenderest susceptibilities of conventional sentiment and of the whole order of thought dearest to academic decorum, has rapidly made itself felt in all recent historical studies It is nearly everywhere recognized that the first indispensable foundation to the clear understanding of any given epoch or people, is not its metaphysical conceptions, or even its political situation, but its economic conditions

But in regard to the particular question which we were asking—By what means has human progress been effected? or, what comes to the same thing, What have been the causes of progressive development? the economic theory of history labours under a serious disadvantage it is entirely irrelevant It does not supply any explanation of the fact of progress There is no perceptible or intelligible reason why changes in the conditions of production and distribution should result in continuous advance Brilliant as is the light which the principle has shed upon the complex facts of history, it affords no insight into the greatest and most fundamental fact of all So far as I know the exponents of the theory lay no claim to supplying an explanation of continuous progress Nay, the various changes which they point out as being direct effects of altered economic conditions, the subverting of primitive communistic relations, the rise of various forms of class power, the development of private property, the shaping of political, intellectual, and moral standards and conceptions in accordance with dominating interests, are in every case changes which they deplore So far as any relation is manifested between the complex development of economic conditions and the great fact of human progress, the former would appear to play the part of an obstacle rather than that

of a means and efficient cause Progress appears to have taken place in spite of, rather than as a consequence of them

III

CAUSATION IN PROGRESSIVE PROCESSES

In seeking the cause of that progressive character of development it is necessary to clear our ground by a more definite understanding of what, in this connection, we are to consider as a cause The question of causation in human evolution, and in all evolutionary processes, is beset with the confusion which attaches to that terrible word 'cause,' to the notion of 'chance,' and to the brain-whirling abysses which they set yawning before the mind

Touching the nature of causation in general the upshot of the matter is that we do not know at all the nexus between a cause and its effect we only view the sequence and its constancy That there *is* a nexus, we have, from that constancy of sequence, good grounds for surmising , and if we knew its nature we should be in possession of the inmost secret of the universe

There is nothing so very abstruse about the notion of 'chance,' if we take the trouble to think clearly

It is constantly said and accepted as pure wisdom that when we speak of 'chance' we are merely using the term as an expression of our ignorance of the true cause of a sequence of events That is absolutely false When we speak of a series of events as determined by chance, in contrast with a more specific determination, we have a perfectly definite and correct distinction in our minds We mean that among the multitude of circumstances which condition the occurrence of the chance event, none bears a *constant* relation to the result

If we spin a coin, there is not among the numerous play of forces which condition the result—head or tail—any one condition, or set of conditions, so related to the result 'head,' or to the result 'tail,' that it will constantly tend to bring about the one rather than the other There is no constant and necessary nexus, no indissoluble connection of cause and effect between any of the determining conditions and one result rather than the other, any one of those conditions may, according to its combination with other circumstances, turn the scale in favour of heads, or in favour of tails indifferently The relation between each one of the operating causes and the given result is not direct and indissoluble, but absolutely indifferent So much so that if the coin-spinning be repeated long enough, those indifferent conditions will neutralize and cancel one another, so that the result 'head' will come about as often as the result 'tail'

But if we toss the coin many times and the result turns out to be always the same, we at once begin to have misgivings, and to entertain a suspicion that the conditions are not purely those of 'chance' If we go on repeating the experiment a great number of times, and the coin persists in showing 'heads,' our suspicion gradually becomes converted into a conviction that there is some cause at work which does not come under our notion of chance, a cause which is directly related to the constant result If on examination we discover the coin to be loaded, we shall no longer speak of the effect as due to chance There is a direct constant connection between the loading of the coin and the result whereas there is no such direct connection between any of the other circumstances and that result And the presence of that directly related cause determines the constant *tendency* throughout the series Whenever a series of phenomena exhibits a constant tendency there must exist a constant cause directly related to that tendency, a cause which will always act in the direction of the particular result, whatever be the influence of other conditions Indifferent conditions, conditions which are not constant, and which bear no direct relation to a given result, which may indifferently bring about that, or any

other, according to the manner in which they are combined, cannot give rise to a constant tendency they can only, and must in the long run, neutralize one another They condition the result, but cannot constantly determine it, they will at one time favour it, at other times oppose it The constant and direct factor may be assisted or checked by those environing conditions, may avail itself of them, or be pitted against them, but the determinate and constant tendency depends upon the determinate and constant factor, not on indifferent conditions

Every river tends to the sea, the nature of the country will modify the nature of its course, in one place it will foam through a narrow, eroded gorge, in another wind through a low valley, here spread itself out over a wide plain, there leap hurtling over a granite ledge, the manner of its course is conditioned by a multitude of circumstances, but neither hills, nor plains, or granitic outcrops determine the invariable gravitational tendency to the sea

Every process of evolution is a series of phenomena in which there is a constant tendency Like every other series of phenomena it is *conditioned* by innumerable circumstances They all affect the process But the cause of the evolutionary character of the series is the cause of its constant tendency All others are out conditioning causes amid which the process operates Profoundly as they may affect it, they are not causes but conditions The persistent confusion of nearly all the theories of human evolution has been to ignore all distinction between the two orders of factors

No possible combination of indeterminate and indifferent circumstances, capable of acting this way or that way, bearing no constant and direct relation to a given issue, can determine a continuous series of events having a constant tendency, a continuous motion, a growth, an age-long progress, an evolution

We have, it is true, in the theory of natural selection method which is held by an influential school of biologists to afford a complete explanation of evolution the organic world, and which claims to explain a pro-

cess of continuous progress by the operation of an infinity of indifferent conditions. But, as is well known, that claim is open to grave dispute. Fortunately, it is quite needless for us to enter upon the thorny ground of that controversy. Most advocates of the theory are ready to admit that it may require considerable modification in its application to the human race. That it does apply to a certain extent there can be no doubt: the most progressive races occupy the van of human progress. But that somewhat tautological verity leaves open the inquiry as to the sources of that pre-eminence and progress. Whether we adopt or reject the theory of natural selection makes, however, not the slightest difference to the issue under consideration. If we adopt it we shall be merely called upon to restate that issue in the terminology of the theory. What are those characters (variations) of human beings which constitute an advantage to be selected by its success? It is clear that the introduction of the formula of natural selection is here a gratuitous superfluity, for it is precisely to the nature of those qualities, of those means through which man has achieved his evolution that our question refers.

The causes of the process of human evolution are the same as those of all living evolution. Whether those be an impulse to progressive development, to the extension of the powers of life, innate in its very constitution, or the necessarily cumulative effect of successive adaptations to its conditions, or the selective operation of those conditions on successive adaptive variations, it is fortunately immaterial for our purpose to discuss—if indeed those be anything more than different ways of viewing and expressing the same fact. The problem in the present case narrows itself down to a recognition of the *means* employed in human progress to extend the powers of adaptive control over the conditions of life. It is in the operation of those means alone that any conjectural impulse or any favourable variation is manifested; it is those means and methods employed by the organism itself which constitute the cause of the progressive character of the process.

As in the idealistic and in the racial theories we must then seek for the progressive factor in man himself No geographical or economic determination can supply that constancy of direction For they are but conditions of the process, and, whatever fundamental influence they may exercise upon its course, they are from the nature of their action incapable of imparting to it a progressive character But, at the same time, no power in man can operate or develop irrespectively of those and all other encompassing conditions Indeed, those powers are nought else than powers to act upon, and in relation to them Like every manifestation of life, they have no existence but as reactions of which the reacting organism is but one term , the other term is represented by the infinite complexity of the ambient medium to which it is life's necessity to adapt itself, and which it is its ambition to control

CHAPTER III

RATIONAL THOUGHT, ITS ORIGIN AND FUNCTION

I

MAN'S ADAPTIVE VARIATION

It is, I think, fairly obvious that we shall obtain an important clue to the means by which human progress has been effected, if we turn in the first place to the antecedent question: By what means did mankind come into existence at all? By virtue of what qualities did the incipient and potential human race become differentiated from its animal progenitors, emerge distinctly above its competitors, establish itself successfully in the world, and obtain a predominance and mastery over its environment unparalleled in all previous evolution? There is, to say the least, a strong presumption that the same qualities which in the first instance raised man above other animals, placed him upon an incomparable level, made him man, continued to operate in the same direction and with the same success, that the causes which determined his initial victory were closely related to his subsequent development

We are, it is true, referring to an event about which we possess no direct information Yet the problem is a simple one, for the characters and qualities which would confer on the most primitive and emergent human race such a distinct advantage over its animal competitors, are so manifest as to leave little room for doubt or difference of opinion

Progress in organic evolution has consisted in increased power to deal with the environment by means of greater efficiency in the organs of sensation and of action Sensation serves to direct the operation of the means of action, and thus extends immensely their

scope and efficiency The power of claw and fang, of limb and wing, is dependent upon the keenness of eye and ear By the perfecting of those powers of control over the environment, the means of maintaining life, of providing for its support, of protecting it from adverse agencies, of outdistancing rivals in the competition for existence, have been multiplied The means which primitive brute-man developed to that end proved incomparably the most efficient ever employed in the animal world They consisted in a particular extension of the functions of sensation For most of the organs of sensation, as a close and detailed examination would show, depend for their successful operation upon the power of recalling past impressions, and of applying past experiences to present situations thus interpreting the significance of the latter in reference to the immediate future Sight, for instance, derives its utility from the fact that it supplies information as to what would be the sensations yielded by closer contact with the remote object perceived by the eye This can only be done by the association of an impression of sight with the memory of a past experience the sight of a threatening enemy or of an attractive victual, informs the seeing animal by recalling past experiences of danger or of gratification associated with similar sensations from the eye The same is true of all sensations at a distance By an extension of the same process through more elaborate nervous interconnections, the procedure can be carried further Multitudes of diverse impressions can be gathered together and variously combined, the record of past experience can be perfected and generalized and this greatly elaborated past experience can be more efficiently brought to bear upon the impressions of present circumstances, giving them an extended significance Thus the bearing of the present upon either the immediate or more remote interests of the individual acquire a vastly wider scope and his efficiency in dealing to his advantage with his environment is correspondingly raised and extended, his powers indefinitely multiplied and increased That process is that of rational thought

I use the term 'rational thought' in preference to 'reason,' because the latter is too closely associated in the popular mind with the old fallacious conception of a 'faculty,' a sort of special organ having an isolated existence, and endowed with mysterious powers peculiar to itself In accordance with that fantastic psychology, people currently speak of 'using their reason' or of not using it, of using their feelings, their will, or their imagination instead of their reason Rationality is not an organ, but a quality, a character of thought In the circuit between experience and action, feeling and reaction, there is always interposed in man a process of mental digestion in which feeling and experience are chewed and transformed into the stuff whence action is made, into the supposition, the belief, the conviction upon which action proceeds That intermediary process is always present to a greater or lesser extent it constitutes thought And that thought is in its mode of operation, in its method, rational to a greater or less extent It is never entirely irrational, because its very function, the purpose which constitutes the origin of its existence, is to act rationally But that function is commonly performed imperfectly - the thought is not adequately rational A man does not use any other faculty 'instead of his reason' he uses his brain-cells more or less rationally

The conditions of the efficient operation of that power are consistency with past and present experience and with itself That is, it must possess adequate and adequately correct experience, be faithful to it, and not contradict itself in drawing inferences from it The reason why such a process is efficient in drawing from the past and the present conclusions as to the future (or from the known to the unknown), and in therefore empowering the individual to adapt his action to those present and future conditions, is that the course of nature is uniform, that similar conditions are followed by corresponding sequels, that all things and appearances in the world are rigidly and accurately interconnected, so that there is always a definite and constant relation between any one aspect and all others Which,

by the way, is but another way of saying that all things are bound up in one, that the world in its infinite variety is one great unity If that were otherwise, if the world were incongruous, and lawless, if its parts were independent entities which could take the bit in their teeth, and act without reference to one another, this way to-day, and that way to-morrow, if the unconditioned, the arbitrary could break through the course of events, rational thought would be entirely useless It would never have received from the external environment any stimulus to develop at all, it would never have been 'selected', it would never have come into existence Rational thought is an adaptation of the organism to the most general and fundamental character of man's external environment

The tendency towards such an adaptation existed in the animal world long before man It rests, as we have just noted, upon the same organic principle as the higher forms of sensation But its tap-root sinks much deeper, in the method of all animal behaviour and reaction from its very dawn in the reaction of all life That method is that of Trial and Error You have seen some foraging beetle with its burden come suddenly upon an unexpected obstacle, repeatedly endeavour to surmount it, seek a passage first in one direction, then in another, explore half the points of the compass, and after long minutes of persevering and fruitless attempts, hit at last upon some path through or round the obstacle That is the universal tactical principle of all vital action Between the method of trial and error and that of rational thought there is no line of demarcation, the one merges into the other Trial and error is a perfectly sound rational process, it arrives by a somewhat lengthy and laborious procedure at a result which 'works,' which fits in with the facts The rejection by the amœba, by the beast, of a line of action which has proved inefficient, fruitless, or dangerous, is the exclusion of an exploded opinion, and is exactly similar to that of critical thought, which narrows down its choice by the exclusion of a view which is found to be untenable Rational thought is

but a labour-saving, perfected method of obtaining the same correspondence with facts, just as algebraical or differential calculation is a labour-saving development of the process of reasoning The primitive and universal method of trial and error passed by slow degrees into the more perfect one of rational thought, which is quite commonly used by the higher animals The entire class of mammals owes, indeed, its evolutionary success, as does man, to brain development That development first reached in the anthropoid race a degree capable of reacting through its effects and activities upon its own growth, and was thus stimulated to an expansion advancing in geometrical progression

The brute-man first bethought himself of using his brain as a handle to his tools and weapons It was that power, that adaptation, it was solely the exercise of rational thought which gave him his paramount victory That and nothing else He possessed no other qualification to supremacy over other mammals, no other advantage commensurate with his achievements The one or two distinctive anatomical peculiarities of the human animal are, by comparison, trifling Moreover, though until lately it was an interesting subject of anthropological speculation whether the erect attitude has preceded and assisted brain-development, or vice versa, the recent great extensions of our knowledge of human ancestry have virtually settled that question Brain-development was the first and only predominant character of differentiation, and the erect attitude, and consequent development of the hand, followed only much later, in correlation with the effects arising out of the primary character The very bodily form of man is an effect of the power of rational thought

Exclusively through that power which superseded all other tools, organic contrivances, and weapons, which rendered obsolete all other methods of supremacy hitherto produced by organic evolution, he became man The lordship of the earth was his, and what later came to appear as an impassable gulf between him and all other creatures was established Whatever other

characters may be mentioned as peculiar to, and distinctive of man at the present day, such as various developments of feeling, emotion, sentiment, moral sense, social organization, it is clearly not through any of those that the differentiation of the human race from its animal progenitors was effected The incipient anthropoid race did not establish itself through a higher morality, or refinement of feeling, or poetical imagination, or sublime ideals, or economic arrangements. Those characters would obviously have been absolutely useless in the circumstances And moreover they did not exist ; they are subsequent developments, they owe the possibility of their existence to the position established by the power of rational thought Without human rational thought, no human morality, no human religious sentiments, no ideals, no high aspirations, no social organizations or obligations Rational thought had to make man first, had to open the way for all subsequent developments and possibilities

II

RATIONAL THOUGHT AS MEANS OF PROGRESS

That being the means by which the human race has achieved the first transcendent evolutionary victory to which it owes its existence—and the fact is hardly open to dispute—there is clearly a considerable *a priori* presumption that the same power has also been concerned in its subsequent evolution That original factor has in its proved efficiency in the first stages a prior claim to be regarded, before any other explanation is put forward, as not inadequate to account also for the subsequent phases of the same process There is no

indication that any radical change of method has taken place at any stage of that process, that the original instrument of success became later superseded by others Rational thought was the sole efficient means of human emergence out of animality, may it not also have been the sole efficient means of the whole growth which it originally rendered possible?

That is the present writer's view Rationality of thought has, I believe, been from first to last the means and efficient cause of the evolution of the human race It has not been merely one of several factors, or even the most important among them, but strictly and without qualification the sole actual instrument of human progress in whatever aspect it be considered

Nothing is more complex than the medium in which the growth of humanity has taken place, for it includes not only the physical universe, the material necessities of life, but also the even vaster and more varied world of the human mind and of human relations; passions and appetites, emotions and interests, prejudices and aspirations, social systems and institutions, thoughts, doctrines, traditions, and the interplay, conflicts, and infinite permutations of all those factors They have each and all impressed their influence variously and deeply upon the form and course of human evolution, the process has been shaped, moulded, coloured, given its form and features by those and a thousand other elements and factors, physical, physiological, economical, sentimental But its actual forward development, its progressive character is exclusively the effect of that particular instrument of adaptation by which the human race has been differentiated

All other factors have been, not means or efficient causes of the process of progress, but conditions They have promoted progress or impeded it, sped it or retarded it, according as they have acted favourably or unfavourably upon the operation and development of rational thought In no case is their relation to the fact of progress continuous and invariable, their influence may be at one time favourable and at another time unfavourable Thus political freedom is of all conditions one

of the most favourable to human development; yet without autocracy and despotism civilization could not have arisen at all, it has had its birth in absolute power, has constantly been promoted by autocratic and aristocratic despotism, and large masses of mankind by remaining in a state of tribal freedom have been irremediably condemned to arrested growth. Military power exercises in general a profoundly pernicious influence on development, yet wars of pure aggression and conquest have been among the most potent and momentous factors which have assisted human progress Division of labour is one of the most fertile sources of efficiency, but it has also been the means of bringing about oppression and the most hopeless stagnation. There are few influences which have been more fatal to intellectual advance and human development than theological dogmatism, yet it has at times exercised important beneficent influences, has proved a stimulus through its challenges, has assisted progress by establishing a common bond and medium of thought Even intellectual culture itself, though it might loosely be regarded as coextensive with rational development, may, if disdainful of it, be a check to progress instead of a means and manifestation of it Thus it is that the task of advocacy is so smooth, that the *advocatus diaboli* is enabled to make out an excellent case for every abomination, to exhibit to bewildered publics the invaluable benefits of despotism and slavery, the almost indispensable advantages of murder, the redemption of the world by lies, the beneficent effects of fraud, and the incalculable value of disease Deductions are constantly drawn from an apparent similarity of conditions, political, economic, social, in situations where history, it is thought, repeats itself, while those conditions may, as a matter of fact, have totally different results according to the stage of human evolution in which they operate

Although no one perhaps will directly demur to the statement, when put in so many words, that man is first and foremost *homo sapiens*, that all his powers are dependent upon the rationality with which he employs them, and that he succeeds or fails according

as he thinks and acts rationally or irrationally, yet many are quite prepared to uphold views directly implying an entirely different estimate of the sources of human power ; and there is a deeply rooted and widespread disposition to disparage rational thought, and exalt at its expense other supposed powers and methods as the talismans of progress and true human development.

III

ADAPTIVE CHARACTER

Rational thought is man's means of adaptation The world which he has made is the outthrow of his mind The stones of his cities and the steel of his engines are made of thoughts , they are moved, like his battalions of industry and of war, like the pulses of his life, by his ideas That life, that world must, like every form and manifestation of life, be adapted to the conditions which the unbending nature of things, the unrepealed facts of the universe impose That is the fundamental condition of their existence, as of all existence, of their development, as of all development The extent to which man can exercise his powers, control life to his will and purpose, depends upon the measure in which he conforms to existing facts Hence it depends in the last resort upon the accuracy of his perception of them He will fail in the measure that that perception is false, succeed in the measure that it is true. Progress depends upon truth

That adaptation is the function and utility of rational thought. Rationality of thought simply means the

conformity of human ideas and thought to the actual relation of man to his environment. Greater accuracy in the operation of that function means greater adaptation. The aim man has in view in using a rational process is precisely to secure that correspondence between his thoughts and the actual relation and sequence of events. Rational thought developed by virtue of that correspondence, and man uses the method because his experience teaches him that that correspondence can thus be attained

It would be ingenuous to suppose that human evolution has been effected by the purposive application of rational thought to progressive ends The actual process is by no means so simple To conceive it thus, as a gradual growth of rational thought engaged in building the human world, is but a form of the old fallacy which saw in human history the beatific vision of an unfolding mind proceeding in unconditioned independence of the hard exigencies of an untractable universe

Man has only been in an infinitesimal measure rational. He has 'muddled through' in all sorts of haphazard ways He has often achieved adaptation and progress quite irrationally Casual judgment and thoughtless conduct may be in harmony with fact; intentionally rational thought may fail from a thousand sources of error But even the fortuitous success, in so far as it is adaptive, must be rationally valid Whether as the fruit of a deliberately rational process of thought, or because, howsoever arising, a course of action, a view or idea, does in fact correspond to external laws and events, it is, in two somewhat different senses, rational, in the one case with reference to the intention, in the other with reference to the result.

The primordial biological method of trial and error has continued to operate in human evolution as throughout the evolution of life It is the original horse-sense of living things It is the method of experience; you learn by your mistakes, you fail and try again, your later attempts profit by the lessons of previous disasters, until, by a process of exhaustion and by following up

the clues afforded by unsuccessful, or partially successful attempts, success is at last achieved.

The method of trial and error is a perfectly valid and legitimate one; it works. But it is costly and wasteful It is cheaper to be wise, if we can, before the event than after it. Rational thought is the human improvement on the biological method of trial and error, a perfected, economical, immensely more effectual form of it. If one course of action proves successful and another fails *there is a reason for it* If sufficient knowledge had been available, if sufficient trouble had been taken, it would have been possible to know beforehand which was the rational and which the irrational course The successful result is that to which efficient thought would have led, had it been applied With the growth of rationality, the development of experience, of available data, and of the habit of rational thought, its powers contribute more and more to the results of the method of trial and error, shorten and facilitate and economize its waste in an increasing degree The sphere of that method becomes narrowed, that of rational thought extended The more efficient method of adaptation tends constantly to prevail

Every idea, every new point of view, every new procedure arises, recommends itself, proves vital and gains influence, is 'selected,' by virtue of the fact that it is more rational, that is, better adapted, more in harmony with facts and experience, more consistent, more efficient than that which it seeks to supplant In a well-known passage Mill impugns the dictum that truth always triumphs, but his argument from instances of successfully suppressed truth is practically nullified by the qualifying admission that, although what is true may be put down by opposition and persecution once, twice or many times, it comes forward again and again until it ultimately triumphs It arises again and again precisely because the process of rational thought is the only constantly operating factor of growth in human affairs, and the positions to which that process leads must consequently be of necessity reached again, no matter how often they have been abandoned In point

of fact rational development is invariably violently resisted, and very generally put down and defeated, for the simple reason that it is always opposed to the established views and apparent interests of the majority. But it is at the same time inevitably predestined to prevail Truth is at once sure of defeat and of ultimate victory

IV

PROGRESSIVE CHARACTER

Rational thought is the only progressive element in the human world Unlike all other alleged factors of human evolution, the operation of rational thought contains the inherent principles of continuous development While there is no perceivable reason why change of any kind, whether of economic, geographical, or ethnical conditions, should result in such a phenomenon as constant progress, rational thought necessarily involves progress Every advance accomplished lays down at the same time the basis of a further and greater advance by extending the foundations of experience and knowledge The results of rational thought multiply in geometrical progression

But every rational process of thought is above all essentially progressive in its operation because it can never stop short of its ultimate logical consequences. A new idea or principle never proceeds at once to its ultimate conclusion, it is always only in part rational, it is more rational than its predecessors, but still imperfectly adapted, timid, inconsistent, only to a small degree emancipated from those traditional errors and abuses which it opposes Yet once it has arisen, nothing

is more inevitable than that it shall proceed to its last consequences. It is a logical process, and logic cannot stop halfway. That development may be wholly unforeseen at the origin of the process, the most direct and obvious implications of the new principle may not only be entirely foreign to the thought of those who advance it, but wholly abhorrent to them The stimulus to which they react proceeds usually from some particular aspect, or from some grossly prominent excess of existing irrationality, and apart from that aspect, the innovators are as much under the spell and influence of the traditional order of ideas as are their opponents, their attitude towards the most obvious logical consequences of the principle which they champion, is exactly the same as that of their opponents towards the new principle itself The reformers, the revolutionaries, the innovators, the heretics, the radicals, the iconoclasts of former days, would stand aghast before the consequences of their own work, and would occupy to-day the ranks of the most determined opponents of the fruits of those very principles, which they devoted their energies and their lives to establish Yet nothing can arrest the process As the consequences follow inevitably in the order of logical thought, so likewise do they follow inevitably in the order of human development The notions of compromise, moderation, the avoidance of extremes and excesses, are entirely irrelevant and meaningless in the rational process Such a process can only be at fault through defect, never through excess of rationality. A qualified and incomplete application of rational principles can only be provisional, from the moment that the principle is recognized the ultimate recognition of its most remote implications is assured, even though the deduction may take centuries to take effect It is impossible to adopt a rational principle with the proviso—Thus far shalt thou go and no further

We constantly see a rational principle accepted, probably after much initial opposition, recognized at last and embraced, it may be, with sincere enthusiasm by a large section of those who at first distrusted it,

but the same opposition with which they greeted it is now directed with equal fierceness against its immediate consequences. A party always exists which thinks to establish a comfortable and permanent resting-place in the midst of the advancing tide; while they accept the accomplished fact, and disclaim the resistance which they once offered to its coming, while they speak much of truth and open-mindedness and progress, of the evils of bigotry and blindness, their attitude towards the position which that idea has reached by the time that their first opposition is overcome, is the same as that which they adopted towards its earlier form So that, while they take credit for their enlightenment, progressiveness and liberality in accepting what can no longer be disputed or opposed, they are still in relation to the march of the idea exactly in the same position as they were before Temperance, moderation are the words constantly on their lips, and all subsequent advance beyond the milestone where they happen to be halting is lamented as excess, intemperate and extreme opinion From stage to stage of the inevitable growth of one and the same principle we find the same situation repeated Such is the experience which daily meets us, yet men appear unable to profit by its almost tedious repetition

We can here trust the law which governs human evolution as implicitly as any physical law, and foresee future development as confidently as an astronomer predicts an eclipse It is as impossible to arrest the course of a rational process or principle before its uttermost consequences have been exhausted, as it is for a falling stone to remain suspended in mid-air Logical processes know neither compromise, nor temperance or moderation Thus only the extreme view is right, is destined to survive

CHAPTER IV

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HUMAN AND ORGANIC EVOLUTION

I

THE BEARER OF HUMAN HEREDITY

MAN'S evolutionary victory was won by means which, while rooted in the deepest forms of vital activity and arising out of them, were yet, in their power and application, novel as paramount instruments of life They no longer consisted in gross modifications of physical structure, instruments and weapons were not, as in animal evolution, fashioned out of limbs and organs, directive powers more pliant and subtle enabled man to modify his physical environment itself, to shape his tools out of it, and spread out the tentacles of his brain His means of evolution were mental, and, so far as he was concerned, the old animal evolution operating upon actual bodily structure was at an end

It is not infrequently inquired by people to whom our soi-disant system of education permits but a casual and hearsay acquaintance with evolutionary science, whether we may expect the form of man to undergo startling changes, whether he is likely to put forth wings, or grow eyes at the back of his head There is not the remotest probability of any such interesting developments. His bodily structure is constantly being modified by changes in his mode of life, but those modifications are of a relatively minor, almost negligible importance, and, to all intents and purposes, his bodily form is outside the operation of those causes which brought about organic change.

The products of human evolution, like its means, take a different form They are not physiological organs,

but ideas, methods, thoughts, habits, theories, devices, social organizations. They are not anatomical but psychological.

That circumstance is fraught with consequences of gigantic import The unprecedented nature of the means and products of human evolution carries with it an equally peculiar method for their transmission from one generation to another.

Those products are not, and cannot be transmitted by way of physiological reproduction Each successive generation must acquire them *de novo* during its lifetime It acquires them solely through the human environment in which it is born and develops Its ideas, its conceptions, its ways of thought, its habits, its aims, its motives, its morals, are handed down to it by the human world, by the human circumstances, the social condition, the literature, the state of society in which its development takes place The evolutionary grade of development of the new generation is determined, not by physiological processes, not by its place in the genealogical tree of the race, but by the nature of the human world as a whole, by all the human influences which are brought to bear upon it by the entire race

Certain aptitudes, capacities of easy acquisition, 'educability,' predispositions towards certain types of reaction, are doubtless physiologically transmitted, but the actual results of evolution, the actual significant achievements which constitute its products can only be acquired through the agency of the whole human environment. If an English baby were put to nurse with a Central African tribe in exchange for a nigger baby, and the latter very carefully brought up in England, the nigger baby, when he grew up, would be a civilized man substantially in possession of the fruits of European evolution, and the English baby would be a savage. Of course the civilized nigger would not be *quite* on a level with the equally educated European, and the English savage would differ in some respects from his African companions There would be in both characteristics due to physiological heredity, not to human environment But the effect of those physiologically in-

herited characteristics would, even in so extreme an instance, be as *nothing* compared to the effects of education by the environment So far as the actual fruits of human progress, and participation in the process are concerned, their respective situations would be reversed. The nigger would be in a position to take a share in civilized life, and the Englishman would not.

"There is widely current a vague belief," justly remarks Dr W McDougall,[1] "that the national characteristics of the people of any country are in the main innate characters. But there can be no serious question that this popular assumption is erroneous and that national characteristics . are in the main expressions of different traditions . . Relatively to the national peculiarities acquired by each individual in virtue of his participation in the traditions of his country, the innate peculiarities are slight and are almost completely obscured in each individual by these superimposed acquired characters . . Suppose that throughout a period of half a century every child born of English parents was at once exchanged (by the power of a magician's wand) for an infant of the French nation Soon after the close of this period the English nation would be composed of individuals of French extraction, and the *French* nation of individuals of English extraction It is, I think, clear that, in spite of this complete exchange of innate characters between the two nations, there would be but little immediate change of national characteristics. The French people would still speak French, and the English would speak English, with all the local diversities to which we are accustomed and without perceptible change of pronunciation The religion of the French would still be predominantly Roman Catholic, and the English people would still present the same diversities of Protestant creeds. The course of political institutions would have suffered no profound change, the conditions and habits of the peoples would exhibit only such changes as might be attributed to the lapse of time . The inhabitants of France would still be Frenchmen and the inhabitants of England Englishmen to all outward

[1] *Social Psychology*, p 329

seeming, save that the physical appearances of the two peoples would be transposed"

What is true of even the minor traits which distinguish one civilized nation from another is, of course, even more clearly and momentously true of civilization itself, of the actual fruits of the process of human development and progress

We hear a great deal about the improvement of the race by scientific breeding In consonance with the current pseudo-scientific dogma of 'race,' there is no humorous imbecility from which the criers of the panacea of 'breed' can be restrained "Through the selection and regulation of breeding as intelligently applied as in the case of domestic animals, (man) will control his own destiny and attain *moral* heights as yet unimagined"[1] It is more than questionable whether, except as regards the stamping out of pathological taints (which are amenable to other remedies), eugenists, if they were given carte blanche, could achieve anything desirable. But the evolutionary products which are dependent upon physiological heredity are altogether inconsiderable compared with those which are not dependent upon that process There is something tragically pathetic in the zeal displayed for improving the race by the control of physiological heredity, while at the same time the means by which the products of human evolution are in fact transmitted, and which *are* directly and easily amenable to human forethought and management, are under present conditions, and under a so-termed 'system of education' of almost troglodytic crudity, abandoned to the mercy of chance, or rather stultified and perverted to defeat the ends of evolution

If we are superior to our woad-painted ancestors, it is not so much that we are born with higher qualities, but that we are born in a human environment in which the achieved results of rational thought have been from generation to generation handed down And those very qualities which are physiological and hereditary are themselves correlated with conditions arising from the accumulated products of rational power and human

[1] M Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, p 85

control. So that even if those slight physiological modifications could be cultivated, while non-physiological progress was arrested through entire neglect, the improvement of those slight products themselves would tend to cease through the drying up of the source whence flow the conditions which produced them

The products of human evolution are not included in the characters which physiological heredity transmits The human world in all its aspects, including every race and nation which exercises an influence over others, which exchanges thought, opinions and knowledge, contributes arts and inventions, including every current estimate and conception, and every revolutionary thought, the customs, manners and habits which are in vogue, the social organization which obtains, all the conditions arising out of it, the forms of government, the institutions, the beliefs, and above all the types and systems of ideas, the standards of honour and of conduct, the point of view, the norms of judgment, the sanctions, biases and prejudices shaped in accordance with the relations and interests attaching to those conditions, that human environment which supplies all the contents and powers, shapes all the tendencies of every mind which is born and matures in its midst—that is the carrier of heredity in human evolution

II

HUMANITY AS ORGANISM

The word 'humanity' is habitually received with a defensive sneer, as if some questionable piece of hollow rhetoric, savouring of Anacharsis Klootz and eighteenth-century anthropomorphism, were being foisted upon one 'Is there such a thing as "humanity"? Is the

similitude of an organism applied to the collection of human individuals which together make up the human race anything more than a convenient figure of speech? What is "humanity" beyond the sum of its component individuals?'

In regard to the all-important function of transmission the conception of humanity as an organic whole is no metaphoric abstraction, no loose verbal expression, but a sober and accurate scientific fact. Humanity, as a whole, is the only organism which transmits the products of human evolution A man does not derive them from his parents, they contribute almost nothing in that respect Every man is born a wild little animal susceptible of developing into a howling savage, a man of the fifth century, of the fifteenth century, of the twentieth, or of the twenty-fifth It is the vast organism, the human world, which makes him what he is, and determines to what stage of human evolution he shall belong

You cannot actually perceive humanity as a physical organism? Try, then, to perceive individual man as a mere physical organism apart from humanity In order to do so you must imagine our new-born baby, or a dozen of them, transferred at birth, not to a savage tribe this time, but to a desert island, and miraculously enabled to subsist and grow up. What will become of the products of human evolution in their case? How will individual man, minus humanity, compare with the lowest Australian Arunta? Failing the transmission by humanity of the products of the evolution of humanity—that metaphorical abstraction—you have nothing left, but a very pitiable and impossible physical abstraction—the individual man Our 'component individual'—let him be, for choice, eugenically bred and furnished with the most superior kind of germ-plasm—will be at the Caliban stage of human evolution

We are wont to recognize in a loose, casual way that we are indebted for certain material advantages and conveniences to the human world we live in, to 'society', that we are supplied with clothes, and food, and houses,

and policemen, and books, if we have a mind for such; a debt which it is only fair we should repay by some little service. But it is not our clothes, or our food, or the roof over our heads that we owe to humanity, it is our being itself. Let that inheritance which humanity has bestowed on you be, by a magic stroke, cancelled, and instantaneously you cease to exist, you shrivel and dissolve like Rider Haggard's "She" at the lifting of the spell that gave her eternal youth; you sink and disappear into a blank, dumb animal. Nor is it, observe, from any social unit, the State, your country, which sends you in its bill for house and policeman, and claims gratitude, that you derive your existence as a product of evolution; but from nothing less than the human race. To say nothing of the contributions of the remote past, from prehistoric culture, from Egypt, or Greece, or Rome, at least as much has been contributed to our English life to-day, to every external and internal aspect of our being, by France, by Italy—yes, and by Germany, as by England. It is not a question of gratitude, and debts to be paid—quite detestable as well as admirable items are included in the heritage—any more than your birth is a ground of gratitude towards your parents; it is merely a question of fact. A man's powers of life are born out of the loins of humanity.

And the growth and development of those powers can only proceed in relation to that human medium. If he carries the process of evolution a step further, if he breaks away from the circle of ideas in which he finds himself, and casts aside the standards of judgment which he has inherited, the very impulse which animates him is derived from his environment, and its range and direction are themselves determined by the conditions and spirit of the times. The reach of his practical conduct is even more directly limited than that of his thought. For what he judges to be right in the relations between man and man cannot be given effect to by himself alone, he must adapt himself to the world as he finds it. His ideals and aspirations require for their realization the co-operation of the whole race. It

is impossible for one man to be wise in a world of fools.

One of the floundering notions of pre-scientific historical philosophizing was the preposterous theory that "history is the biography of great men." It is preposterous because great men, like all other men, are the products of their human environment; and if, by virtue of the character of that environment, they are enabled to go a little way beyond it in clearness of sight, they can only influence their age, modify their human environment (to retain the biological phrase), by appealing to qualities and tendencies—much more complex than any evolution of which the individual is capable—which are already present and ripe in the medium which produced them. Nowadays we are coming to realize that a much more important question than, 'Who was the originator, the inventor of that idea, of that device?' is 'How came that idea to grow? What is the history of its development? What are the steps by which that discovery, that invention evolved?' In the case of the men whose names are associated with the most revolutionary changes in human history and ideas, such as Gautama, Muhâmmad, Luther, Columbus, Copernicus, Newton, Watt, Darwin, so long and widespread is the mental genealogy of precursory ideas, so thoroughly is the influence they exercised in harmony with the tendencies and ideas ripening in the mental atmosphere and conditions of their times, that it is often difficult to say with certainty which is their individual contribution and which that of the collective agencies of the age, and that we may in many cases doubt whether those revolutions would not have taken place in much the same way and at the same time had they been absent from the stage. Even those 'supermen' whose colossal figures traditionally loom as the very embodiment of overpowering individualism, violating fate itself, diverting with their strong hand the course of history, seizing mankind by the hair and curbing the age to their own masterful will, a Cæsar, a Napoleon,[1] can on a closer scrutiny be seen to have

[1] See Ferrero, *Giulio Cesare*, and A. Vandal, *L'avènement de Bonaparte*.

been called forth, evoked, created by the operation and natural selection of circumstances, to have been drawn into and carried away breathlessly by the current of events in the stream of which they struggled gasping and fearful, and in their boldest hour to have been driven by the necessity of an environment whose awful pressure they were powerless to withstand

As a consequence of the special nature of the products of human evolution, and of the fact that the reproductive system which transmits them is not in man but in humanity, a situation of peculiar difficulty was created, and a set of problems and tasks appalling in their magnitude was imposed upon the race

To individual man the new means of evolution opened up new horizons of aspiration and new spheres of development The power of expanded and keener vision ranging over vaster fields of relations, while it conquered the world of organic struggle, simultaneously threw open an entirely new world His desires, his interests, his joys and his cares, his concern in life, his vital needs, dilated to the dimensions of his expanded horizons The range of perception determines that of feeling , though reason was the sole attribute which made him what he was, it unlocked a flood of accentuated passions, of transfigured interests, desires, emotions. The face of life was transformed , the outlook no longer consisted merely in a day to day, hour to hour care for its preservation, it embraced larger spans of time, came to include the whole of existence, birth and death, the succession of generations, the relation of it all to the great impassive surroundings He no longer lived by bread alone The range of his desires and wistfulness, the eye of his ambitions and aspirations knew no bounds

But those hugely expanded powers and possibilities of individual development were faced with a new opposition Concurrently with their growth a new condition of adaptation was imposed upon them Not only were they required to be adapted to physical conditions, to the ambient universe, to the various exigencies to which all life is subject , they were in addition required to adapt themselves to a new environment, to a new world

which they had themselves brought into being, to the environment of humanity. Apart from that strange new organism those powers are non-existent

And yet between it and individual man with his vast aspirations of development there is of necessity a raging conflict. The human environment imposes its exigencies and conditions upon the activity and growth of the individual with a tyranny as ruthless and as unbending as any other form of environment. The categorical imperative of its terms presses upon man no less inexorably than that of any physical surroundings, wind, flood, cold, and famine, upon the most gelatinous first-born of life's broods He may no less, save at his peril, ignore them

That conflict, that imposed process of adaptation and adjustment is the pervading task of human evolution. In that process there are in fact two evolutions, the evolution of man and that of humanity The task of the latter is no other than the shaping of a new organism, of a new form and structure of life It answers in many respects to that which, in the course of organic evolution, life achieved when isolated protozoa drew gradually together into groups, into polyzoic organisms, when differentiation of function took place among the individual cells, when a multicellular organism, such as is man himself, emerged at last from the long equilibration But the human task is greatly more complex Its magnitude and difficulty overshadow all other problems and all other tasks Hence the paramount place of ethics in human life.

We shall see that it is precisely through man's failure to perceive with clear consciousness the reality of that relation and the nature of that task, that by far the largest proportion of his disasters, of the breakdowns of his organizations, of his miseries and of his perplexities has arisen

CHAPTER V

CUSTOM-THOUGHT AND POWER-THOUGHT

I

CUSTOM-THOUGHT

WITH the character of man's powers of evolution, the inevitable cumulative action of rational thought, the inherently progressive direction of its path, in clear view, it is their failure to achieve more, rather than their success, which stands in need of explanation, and we seem called upon to look not so much for the manner in which progress has resulted, as for the causes that have delayed and obstructed it. And it is, indeed, the feeling of that contrast between the conception which rational thought so clearly presents of possible progress, of 'what ought to be,' and human conditions as they actually are, which is the chief and deepest source of scepticism as to the reality of progress.

Man has existed in much the same state of organic development for fifty thousand years or more, and yet during much the greater part of that time he has remained a miserable savage. During the five or six thousand years that he has enjoyed some measure of civilized organization, all his arrangements have remained to a great extent primitive, his thoughts have been for the most part delusions, and he is still at the present day in every aspect of his existence the victim of self-imposed conditions which his thought, wherever it is even in the slightest degree rationally applied, utterly condemns and repudiates.

That the extent of human progress and the rate at which it has taken place do not correspond to the power which rational thought places at the disposal

of the race, is apparent *from* the general character of that progress. We find, in fact, that on a few given occasions, when a conjunction of circumstances favourable to the action of rational thought has existed, a marked and rapid development has taken place, the vigour and fertility of which astonish us when we compare them to the general rate of advance. What we are in the habit of regarding as the beginning of civilization in the Near East makes its appearance with considerable suddenness and swiftly attains its maximum of growth. In Egypt, where we can trace continuously the evolution of human culture from the most primitive stages to a high pitch of development, the transition between rude predynastic times and the height of Nilotic civilization in the IVth and Vth dynasties cannot have occupied more than a very few centuries. In Babylonia, where we first meet with a fully developed civilization and have found no primitive stages at all, we assume that the first steps in culture have taken place elsewhere, and that its elements have been transplanted either from Irân, or, more probably, from the immediate neighbourhood in the valleys of Elam. But even on that supposition the development has been a rapid, a sudden one. The first Aryan civilization of India presents much the same feature. When we come to the outburst of Hellenic culture the rapidity of the gigantic development is one which has never ceased to excite wonder. The Islamic Arabs developed in the course of a few years a culture which has influenced all the subsequent developments of Europe, and which, even when we allow for the cultural impulse which it inherited from Persia, was marvellous in the rapidity of its growth. Our own modern civilization has risen out of darkest barbarism in the course of three or four centuries.

The rate of advance of human progress is not uniform. It is a succession of phases of rapid growth and expansion which gradually die down and cease. That is a familiar feature. It furnishes the theme of most current theories, and civilization is said to proceed by cycles. We shall see that there is a definite reason for both the rapid growth and the arrest. Whenever there

is a rapid development of culture there are special conditions which favour a new activity and freedom of action of thought, whenever there is a slowing down and an arrest there are causes that tend to put an end to and check the activity.

If, then, rational thought has not achieved more, it is not owing to any intrinsic defect in the method of its action, but because its power has only been exercised in a very limited measure Man did not suddenly appear in the world as the possessor of a new talismanic power with which he forthwith proceeded to conquer it, he has only very gradually learned to use his power and to recognize the might which it conferred upon him His growth and progress have proceeded, not in relation to the formidable possibilities of the instrument at his disposal, but in relation to the progress of his gradual apprenticeship in its use

Accustomed though we now are to thinking evolutionally, the taint of the ancient notion of sudden, full-grown creation still deeply discolours our conceptions of human origins We ask, 'When did man first appear on the earth?' as if the creature man ever did thus suddenly appear' So far as present evidence points, the stock destined to develop into the human race must have become separated from all, even the more closely related, animal stocks so far back as the Miocene period If you insist upon trying to attach some definite measure of time to such a statement, you may say something like two millions of years ago But that does not mean that our progenitors of two million, or even of one million years ago, were what we should call men Their chief characteristic was a brain somewhat larger than is to be met with in any non-human animal, and somewhat smaller than that of any existing man. The answer to the question, 'When did the proto-human stock become human?' is a purely arbitrary one The brain increased in size, but at what point precisely that gradual increase was such as to justify the name 'man,' so that one might say 'Here the brute ends and man begins,' is not at all a matter of objective fact, but one of arbitrary values. And, as in all organic evolu-

tion, there were many 'trials and errors,' many ineffectual evolutions leading nowhere. The Neanderthal race of Europe, for example—large enough brained, well skilled in flint-knapping and harbouring some speculative theological notions, though still horribly ape-like in form—is generally thought to be such a cul-de-sac of human development which ended in complete extinction Even the crudest human brain took hundreds of thousands of years to grow, with little to show in the way of outward effects, of created human environments, tentatively, haltingly, slowly, painfully, mostly ineffectually

As with the biological aspect of man, so it has been with his distinguishing power No human 'faculty' suddenly came into the world, no flashing incarnation of '*reason*' *Proto-man was at the pinnacle of organic* evolution, its most successful type, not because he was possessed of a 'faculty of reason,' but because he was just a little, but only a very little, more intelligent than other animals By virtue of that infinitesimal margin of rationality in his dim mental processes his further evolution was secured and accomplished But again that must not be understood to mean that primitive man was rational, thought to any extent at all rationally. Only in an extremely limited sphere, only now and again, only once perhaps in a generation, did a rational quality in his thought actually manifest itself and effectually pierce through to some little achievement, thenceforth to be a permanent inheritance of the race, a step in human progress. What progress was achieved, was achieved thus, but that only happened very seldom. Generally speaking, in all but a few exceptional circumstances, and in a few rare individuals, thought was not by any means rational, was not guided by rationality at all

Ask primitive man, as you still may in the hinterlands of Australia, in the jungle of Ceylon, in the Nilgirri Hills of Southern India, why he sets about doing such and such a thing, eat, catch fish, make butter, in just that uncouth fashion, amid all sorts of fritterings of energy, of irrelevant procedures ; he will invariably

answer, "It is done thus"; he will give you to understand that no other procedure can occur to a man save that which is the custom, the strange suggestion of any other way would not only strike him as excentric, as to you the suggestion that you should walk down Piccadilly in a poncho, but positively depraved, as something horribly unavowable, unnatural, revolting.

And in that answer he has told you one of the inmost secrets of all human history, of the evolution of the human mind. Its lesson is twofold. Early man was only infinitesimally rational. All visions of the primitive hunter sitting at the mouth of his cave after the day's chase, at the coming out of the stars, and meditating on the Great Questions, all notions of the free and noble savage perpetrating 'Social Pacts', all assumptions of deliberation, conscious exercise and application of thought in primitive man, are the most fantastic anachronic fancies Even to-day not a few eminent anthropologists, misled no doubt by the tangled accumulation of successive strata in the palimpsest of custom, are disposed to credit primitive man with a complex mentality, with processes of ratiocination which are, I venture to believe, extravagant anachronisms During by far the longest period of man's development the question 'How?' or 'Why?' simply did not enter his head His procedure in life sought no assistance or sanction from any conscious rationality Of course now and again, in special crises, by the dim horse-sense of the mob, or the particular cerebration of some old wise-head, human action did get rough-hewn in some vaguely rational way, and even custom was transgressed and transcended, else there could have been no change, no progress But that action of rational thought was in the highest measure exceptional Primitive man does not think at all unless driven by direst need, he does not think a step beyond the actual and immediate necessities of the case. No spark of thought ever issues from his reluctant brain unless under the insistent hammer-strokes of urgent realities

And in the second place we learn that what, from

the very beginning, stood in the way of the development of rational thought was no intrinsic impotence, nor confronting complexity of its task, but a monstrous obstacle which its own rudimentary perception had set up From the very first man stemmed the growth of his own thought by absolute surrender to established custom. The direst despotism ever imposed upon the human mind by the dogmatism of a Dominican Inquisition, is mild and lax compared to the unrelenting grip of that tyranny to which, throughout its early development, the human race was bond. In the state of nature all men are born slaves No procedure in human life, no act, no juxtaposition of ideas in man's mind had any other sanction, any other motive or mental basis, than the unchallenged authority of precedent The bare possibility of departure from it did not, as a rule, occur at all, but, if it did, it was an unavowable thought, inspiring a shudder of horror, as something unspeakably indecent, a sin against nature

We are, of course, familiar with the incubus of custom and herd-thought amongst ourselves But, salient as the trait still is in our psychology, it is only dimly representative of the bondage of the savage mind Our conformity has, generally speaking, grown more conscious and motived, our assent to custom more voluntary, we submit to it in things that matter little, we submit to it through a conscious desire not to be strange and conspicuous, not to give offence, or from an intentional wish to hunt with the pack With primitive man the bondage was absolute, it was an unconscious reaction, an innate inertia, a total absence of initiative It did not govern thought, but stood as a substitute in its stead. In the beginning all thought was a revolt and a sacrilege

In trying to express in our modern language that tyrannous authority of custom in primitive psychology, the word 'sacred' naturally occurs to us, we say that custom was 'sacred.' And that of course suggests the idea of religion As a matter of fact, the imitativeness of primitive man has just as much to do with religion as the imitativeness of a monkey playing tricks,

or of sheep jumping through a gap in the hedge. It is a biological inertia Religion, and much else besides religion, did, it is true, ultimately become connected with the sanctity of custom, and that sanctity was in fact the seed from which religion did arise. But that takes us on to a quite later stage of development, to an altogether more advanced phase of human evolution 'Sanctity,' if we must use the word, was long anterior to any religious idea The ritualism of life existed for untold ages ere ever a thought even remotely resembling religious myths or ideas came into the world; ceremony is much older than any meaning attached to it, than any dogma or any theology Custom was inviolable as custom and nothing else, that inviolability was not so much consciously felt, assented to, as unquestioningly acted upon

When conscious explanation, interpretation appears, we have reached a further distinct stage of evolution When that phase comes, custom in some of its aspects has already begun to appear 'strange' Other and different customs have been met with in other tribes, the possibility of an alternative procedure has dawned on the mind, adherence to customary procedure has ceased to be altogether and purely automatic, the feeling of sanctity attached to it has become conscious, the attention has been awakened, some customs have even got so far as to strike one as somewhat absurd An explanation, an interpretation, a new sanction for it is required And so some story, some theory is woven round the procedure which serves to justify and restore its authority In time that explanation will acquire from custom a certain derivative 'sanctity,' and it will thus become a religious myth or theory But the authority of custom purely and simply as such, unconsciously obeyed, is far older and far greater than that of any religious idea

The stability of custom-thought was maintained by the organization of the society in which it ruled, and, acting in a vicious circle, it served in turn to maintain that organization. If all men were born slaves they were at least born equal, and no individual dared rise

above that herd-equality; nor was there any inducement to do so. We are in the habit of assuming that human society has always been organized, in all essential respects, in very much the same manner as it is now. That is pure illusion The present order and all those features which we regard as fundamental of it are comparatively recent. Primitive society was constituted on an altogether different basis. We speak of the family as the foundation of society, we imagine vaguely the first human associations as formed by the forgathering of family groups of fathers, mothers and children, such as those still customary among arboreal apes. All that is erroneous neologistic fancy Mankind did not begin or propagate in families, but, like all hunting animals, in herds or packs Man, like his nearer congeners, was originally a vegetarian The hunting and eating of animals was probably one of the first fruits of his intelligence, and it was the source of his social organization He could not advantageously use his superior cunning without assistance, he could not, for all his new-fangled stone weapons and cleverly contrived pitfalls, conveniently tackle a woolly rhinoceros or a bison or a wild ass single-handed And if he did succeed in killing such game, it was not likely that the hungry humanity about him would allow him to *eat* it by himself Moreover, he could not count on continuous luck, it was his obvious interest to share and be allowed to partake with others The human herd was a necessary consequence, not of any 'social instinct' or 'gregariousness,' and desire for companionship, but of the hard facts of food-quest The human society of the bison-men and wild-ass-men was one of food groups strictly determined by the available quarry, or *totem*, and the means of procuring it

The animal who supplied man with this new delightful and invigorating food was likewise his first god The pleasant and beneficial effects of the new diet were ascribed by man to the assimilation, not of the animal's proteids, but of *his* strength, his life, his spirit. For the 'lord of creation' was totally unconscious of his sovereignty, and thought, on the contrary, that the huge,

snorting, robust, swift, wild animal was a far finer fellow than a poor, lanky, weak, naked, semi-monkey like himself. And quite rightly too. The native denizen of the wild was in every obvious respect far better adapted to his surroundings than the arboreal animal who had left the jungle to hunt him. Primitive man believed in evolution from self-conceit; he wished to believe that he was descended from the bison or the ass whose strength and agility he admired, and he was ambitious to be like him. The countless pictures of animals which we meet with in palæolithic caves are not sporting pictures, but religious pictures. Eating the god in common in order to be like him, to partake of his spirit, was the first religious rite, and it was the consecration of the tribal bond. Sacrifice was not originally offered *to* the god, but the god himself was sacrificed and gave his life to his people. The first origin of religion was not animistic, but gastronomic. Animism belongs to a more advanced stage of development. Primitive man, we are told by some anthropologists, is, like the child, spontaneously animistic, ascribes to all external objects a like personality to his own. That may be so, but that spontaneous animism does not come into play unless called forth by circumstances. And primitive man does not think at all beyond the immediate suggestion of the matter in hand, does not go out of his way to spin theories and fairy tales. His first interest is in his food. And the first thing which he regards with interest, with love, with reverence—all those psychological distinctions merge into one vague sentiment in rudimentary mentality—the first 'sacred' thing, in short, is his food, the animal which he eats; as later it will be the corn, the bread he lives by, and also his weapon, his axe. Later the idea of sanctity attached to the totem animal leads man to abstain from killing it or eating it—except ceremoniously on special occasions; but the ceremonial eating, the communion service, always survives to mark the original meaning. It is only when he came to realize that he was really superior to the animals, when he had tamed and domesticated them, that any animistic ideas entered into his head,

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that he became anthropomorphic, and began to make gods in his own image.

For some reason that has not yet been satisfactorily explained—whether to avoid perpetual conflicts, or from the fascination of the 'strange woman'—the custom obtained in the totemic tribe of marrying out of it. The tribe, the food-group that fed together, was the family, its females were sisters and tabu, its members were brothers and one flesh, the flesh of the totem Hence the absolute equality, hence the closeness and sacredness of the bond of custom-thought, that sacredness was linked with the vital interests of food and existence which hung on the observance of tabus and conformity of action Life was a series of observances, like our 'superstitions'—not to walk under a ladder, not to sit thirteen at table, to raise one's hat to a magpie or to the new moon, not to cut shortbread with a knife, etc Such was the mode of operation of the mind of primitive man, the iron circle in which he moved And it is against the crushing weight of custom irrationalism that the primitive evolution of humanity has taken place Can it be wondered that it was slow and prolonged?

II

POWER-THOUGHT

Custom-thought has not, however, been the only, nor by any means the chief obstacle to the development of rational thought

The most gigantic revolution in human history, a revolution surpassing in magnitude the wildest

delirium of reconstructive imagination, took place some six thousand years ago when in some parts of the world what we call the civilized state was established. The immemorial order under which mankind had existed for hundreds of millenniums was completely broken up and transformed from its foundation. The tribe was supplanted as a social unit by the private family, communism by private ownership and private heritage, herd-equality by class and individual power.

It is out of that revolution and out of the differentiation of powers and interests which it brought about, that a new obstacle to rational thought arose even more formidable than custom-thought.

Power wielded by man over his fellow-men constitutes a means of control over life, beyond all comparison more potent than all the forces at the disposal of individual man and all the instruments he can devise. To have your dinner brought to you is hugely more satisfactory than to go out on to the moors and catch it. Useful as are flint-axes, bone needles, weapons and tools, hand and brain, to get other people to use them for you is an enormous improvement on using them yourself. Not tools and weapons, but men themselves become the instruments of the holder of power. With that discovery, with the possibility of its practical application, a gigantic new force and new factor, overshadowing all others, was introduced in the evolution of humanity. Ialdaboth, the god of power, entered the world and took possession of it. The efficiency and advantages of human instruments of power over tools and weapons, are so enormous that the supreme consideration which takes precedence over all others, is to maintain and increase that invaluable power, that authority, to use not the original endowments and instruments of victory of the creature man, not rational thought, not the control which is by virtue of its adaptive power to facts exercised over the world man lives in, but to use men.

How can that be effected, how is power wielded over men, how can they be used as instruments? Innumerable are the forms and degrees of such power,

the natural commanding superiority of the leader, his wisdom, his valour, knowledge, rank of birth, the physical force of the race of conquerors, divine authority, power with the gods, property, wealth, the constituted authority of the social order, the delegated power of office. But whatsoever that form, that fact of power, an idea, an order of ideas on which it rests and by which it is justified, lies at its foundation. Established authority over men is, like every other product of human evolution, the embodied manifestation of thought.

A new mechanism is hence introduced in the operation of the human mind. In the primitive herd, if thought is unconceivably sluggish if it is an utter slave to custom, it is uniform and single-eyed. There is no conflict or discrepancy in its motives. Its uniformity may be the uniformity of apathy, but when it is by circumstances stimulated to action, its motive, the interest at play is the same for every member of the herd. Individual interest and herd-interest are identical. It is my interest that we should secure a good bag of game in which we shall all share. But as soon as primitive equality is broken up and differentiation of power takes place, there comes about a corresponding differentiation of interests. The interests of the power-holders are no longer identical with those of the herd. And accordingly a corresponding divergence arises in the motivation, in the object and function of thought.

The utilitarian function of thought is to enlighten man as correctly as possible as to his situation and his ways and means. It must, in order to discharge that function, *desire* to achieve correspondence with facts, desire to judge and discover what relation actually does obtain between him and his environment. That is rational thought, that is its purpose and function. But from the moment that differentiation of interests and powers is introduced, that function is radically disturbed. It is not the facts of the environment which are now man's weapons and tools, which have to be discovered and used, but men, men's minds. Not to harmonize and correspond with facts as they are is now the object of thought, but to harmonize and correspond

with the order of ideas on which power and authority rest. That fundamental order of ideas becomes the necessary postulate of all thought. Henceforth the criterion of every mental process is not its intrinsic validity, but its relation to that idea, to that situation of power and authority. That is the sole touchstone by which every judgment, every value, every thought is tested All that tends to undermine it is false, bad, all that tends to consolidate and confirm it is true, good The motive, the criterion of thought is changed in its foundation, its function is diverted and transformed Its aim and purpose is now not to fulfil its original cognitive function, but to frustrate it Thought suffers from a functional disease. It is no longer rational thought, it is power-thought

There is, of course, in every man that contamination of thought by irrelevant emotion and fathering wish, that personal equation which insidiously deflects and vitiates judgment But those idols of the cave are comparatively unimportant. Unimportant and negligible beside the formidable force which has deformed and distorted human thought throughout the course of its development. The entire world of human ideas, language, values, has been shaped and moulded by it.

That tragic infirmity is no congenital disease of the mind, no constitutional weakness ; it is an artifact, a manufactured product of the human order, of human society, like its institutions, armies, thrones and temples It is like those a product arising out of the crystallization of power and interest around dominant sections of the social organism.

The disease is absolutely inevitable and incurable No amount of good intentions can save the holder of any form of power from its fatal ravages. It is not a question of wickedness or unscrupulousness, it is a question of rigid psychological mechanics The power-holder can no more divest himself of power-thought than the rich man can enter the kingdom of heaven

The question in what measure the falsification is deliberate and conscious, though interesting, is not essential An enormous amount of falsified power

thought, by far the largest proportion, is sincere, subconscious, well-intentioned self-deception, an hypertrophied personal equation. But we are too prone, I think, in our tolerant, euphemistic way—euphemism and historical tolerance are themselves forms of self-defensive power-thought in ages of criticism—to minimize in that process the part of deliberate fraud. Wherever we have access to detailed historical evidence we come upon deliberate fraud. And opportunity abounds of observing the process in our own midst. There is very little of the 'sub-conscious,' for instance, in the directions of a Prussian government to its university professors, or of a Fleet Street editor to his leader-writer, or in all the 'education of public opinion' by vested interests. There is, from the witch-doctor and the Pompeian priest's speaking trumpet, down to our own day, a vast amount of intellectual fraud which is not to be wholly emphemized away. The old 'imposture' theory has perhaps been unduly discredited. But it is, in general, impossible to draw any sharp line of demarcation between conscious and unconscious falsification of thought. 'Imposture' may mean no more than that ingenious opinions have a tendency to flow in the channel of interest. The priestly class is favourably inclined to mythology, in the same way as kings are usually royalists, and stock-jobbers are not commonly social reformers. Daily we may see everywhere about us Ialdaboth engaged in his Procrustean task; facts, arguments, valuations are adjusted, lopped or stretched, suppressed or suggested on the iron bed of his interests. Older and immemorial falsifications have arisen in much the same manner, and have long become 'immutable principles,' 'truths,' 'ideals,' for which men are willing to lay down their lives.

Power-thought is fully justified to itself, is a duty, a virtue. The sanctity of sound principles, the principles upon which the existing order rests, is manifest. It would be clearly culpable to abet dangerous tendencies of thought, to dwell on facts which might impress misleadingly, which people in their weakness

and ignorance would fail to interpret soundly. It would be a betrayal of their welfare, of our human duty, to countenance the dissemination of poison Nay, it is culpable in ourselves to allow the mind to dwell on facts, views, which would tend to sap our principles, it is our honest duty to exclude them And if a slight modification in the complexion of facts conduces to the general soundness, the healthy, wholesome disposition of opinion, so much the better Do not our most reputed philosophers at the present day present to us, as the modest conclusion of their straining meditation, the cogent argument that, since we have to live under existing conditions, we *should* believe anything that will help us to do so? That is the 'Practical Reason,' Pragmatism

Like many biological processes, the falsifying operation of power-thought, beginning perhaps as deliberate action, rapidly becomes spontaneous, automatic All of the nature of deliberate intellectual dishonesty, even if at first dimly present, very soon wholly disappears, and without any consciousness of prejudice, with the fullest conviction and purpose of moral and intellectual rectitude, power-thought operates with vulpine astuteness in a medium of stainless integrity and candour Fraud, indeed, more or less deliberate, is not at all the essential or essentially significant and afflicting feature of the process The mechanism of thought itself is invalidated, thought is poisoned in its vitals Every fact is seen through a refracting medium every judgment is coloured, every conclusion deflected, every point of view falsified, every issue prejudiced in a given sense The workings of the mind are distorted, all intellectual counters are counterfeit, men think by means of ideas stamped with spurious values, their vocabulary, the import of words is a part of the falsified mental worlds in which they move About every sphere of authority, of power, of interest, there grows up an atmosphere of constituted opinions and mental attitudes, whose nature is determined not by rational thought, but by power-thought. Whole generations of views and values are engendered, complete mental worlds are

evolved which extend their influence not only where the original interests are involved, but over multitudes whose mental growth has taken place within that environment

There is one quarter at least where power-thought is always and absolutely sincere, with those namely on whom the power is exercised. It is, of course, chiefly in view of them that power-thought operates, although the power-holder himself desires and requires the countenance of power-thought. Its primary object is to influence the minds of those who are used as the instruments of power, they must be made to see the advantages, the justness, the reasonableness, the necessity of the arrangements by virtue of which authority is held, the harmony of them with the order of the universe, the falsity, the wickedness of any view out of harmony with that authority And power-thought is brilliantly justified by the sincerity, the conviction, the enthusiasm, with which it is accepted and honoured by the servants of power, by the devotion and loyalty with which they are prepared to die in its defence. So complete is the success that even the very opponents and critics of power-thought, when such arise, are themselves so steeped in it that it is quite impossible for them to shake themselves free of its influence, the whole formation of their mind is found to be the product of power-thought, and the very weapons which they would direct against the holders of power recoil upon themselves

The sphere of power-thought is 'the choir of heaven and furniture of the earth,' the entire edifice of human thought, knowledge, and valuation. The holders of power have been the civilizers of mankind, its teachers, its educators, its conceptions, language, ideas, are in an enormous measure their creation From our mothers' lips we have learned power-thought, and our youth has been thrilled with its echoes from the mouths of our heroes.

III

THE CONFLICT

The evolution of rational thought, then, has not been a process of gradual growth and unfolding of its power of dealing with the natural problems of its task, but a contest against non-rational thought, against the accumulated force of custom-thought and power-thought

The natural difficulties of rational thought were in themselves sufficiently great The instrument which had evolved from such humble beginnings, as an elaboration of the organs of sense, as a tactical method of fencing with the simple material contingencies of animal existence, became confronted with problems of far other complexity and vastness, problems seemingly pertaining to another order It was called upon to deal with the problems of life, not the mere organic life of the wild, but life transmuted by virtue of that very vision which looked before and after, darted beyond the 'here' and 'now' to infinity and eternity, brought tears and laughter into the world, tinging it with the hues of new emotions, life expanded out of all recognition, ravelled beyond all calculation by a thousand new relations. Problems that grew ever more complex, problems of new adjustments and co-ordinations, of a new polyzoic organism which out of man was being fashioned into humanity, problems implicating in their widening circle ever further problems, positing at last as a postulate to their interpretation, life, the universe, their nature and meaning

Was that poor, pedestrian quality of thought at all competent to deal with that new, amazing world it had called up? Strictly speaking, yes The situation does not exist in which rational thought is not possible; not by omnipotently answering all questions, but by severely assessing the legitimacy and validity of its answer—even though that answer be, as in many cases it needs must be, 'I do not know'—and resolutely repudiating the validity of all other answers In that sense is a rational answer possible to every rational

question; the estimate of the order of certainty, probability, greater or less consistency of the hypothesis with larger or smaller arrays of ascertained facts, being a part integral of every rational judgment And the method of reason, having evolved and approved itself by unbroken correspondence with relations, not with entities, applies with equal validity whatsoever the sphere of its action

To such judicial rectitude of purpose the original rudimentary rationality of man could, of course, only attain through a long and laborious evolution There needed the slow garnering of empirical data, agelong experience, the gradual perfecting of methods, the costly unmasking of countless pitfalls besetting the path of thought, and foredooming it to fallacies only to be refined away by successive lustral waves of critical discipline To cope at all effectually with the complex task imposed upon it, thought has had to battle against formidable difficulties, to wrestle grimly with its own intractabilities, to gain strength and confidence by a prolonged process of growth

But in human evolution the essential feature that actually presents itself to us is not that process of growth It is not that battle of rational thought with the natural difficulties of its task. Seldom indeed has such good fortune befallen man as to be permitted to wage that straightforward fight, whenever it has been granted him, he has acquitted himself with singular ease, and the issue has been for him a triumphant victory Human evolution has indeed been a long and arduous battle, but against quite other forces It is against obstacles which it has itself erected that the mind of man has been fated to war and struggle Not the difficulties of the problems set before it, not the infirmities of reason have resisted and crippled its action, but man-made, artificial obstacles, deformities forcibly, traumatically inflicted upon it in a constant and determined effort to paralyse it In the conflict which constitutes the evolution of humanity, the antagonist of rational thought has been thought falsified by custom and by the interests of power.

That conflict is the theme of history. From the dawn of civilization to this day, under innumerable aspects and names, and in every field, the wavering, age-long battle has raged. Politics and religion, industry and commerce, science, art, philosophy, literature, life, love, have been convulsed in the throes and vicissitudes of the ceaseless contest. Against the sole power and means which man possesses of gauging his position, of directing his action, have been arrayed all the ideas, all the conceptions, all the traditional judgments and valuations, shaped by the desire and interests of those to whom those interests and desires, not the laws that constitute its validity and efficiency, were the tests of thought

It is not between Error and Truth that the secular contest is waged—what is Truth? Who so imbued with error as to deem himself pure therefrom? It is not those figmentally abstracted entities which through the ages face one another in the world of mind, but two ethics of the mind, two methods of conduct, two ways of putting to human use man's instrument of thought —the one concerned with the discharge of its function, the other with turning its edge, and deflecting it from that function, in order to place it in the service of another purpose

Man has had much to learn, but he has had even more to unlearn It is not so much with the riddles posited by the Sphinx of life that thought has had to deal, as with answers and solutions already established in possession and strenuously proclaiming their validity Hence the function of rational thought has been critical rather than constructive Man's chief task has not been to build, but to destroy But such have been the conditions of human evolution that to tear down is to discover, to destroy is to liberate Human thought has shown itself competent enough to fulfil its function whenever it has been set free Freedom is not, as it has become the fashion to consider, an empty shibboleth, but the condition of human development

CHAPTER VI

THE BREAKING OF CUSTOM-THOUGHT AND POWER-THOUGHT

I

MATERIAL PROGRESS

IN two ways, and, so far as I know, in two ways only, has any process ever been initiated by which the walls and fetters of custom- and power-thought have come to be broken by the material products of discovery and invention, and by the cross-fertilization of cultures

Inventions and discoveries are the one form of attack before which the yielding of conservative forces is swift and their struggle feeble We know how modern science has been throughout its career persistently cried down, first as unclean magic and black art, later as impiety and pride of intellect, at best despised as vain, irrelevant speculation. Nothing is more certain than that natural science, had its function been confined to inquiry and interpretation, to increase of knowledge, to perfecting man's means of thought and understanding of his position in this universe, would never have survived the opposition which confronted it It was saved from the first by its utilitarian bearing and material fruits The development of mathematics and astronomy, which at first subserved the uses of agriculture, rendered commercial and imperialistic expansion possible Experimental science in the form of alchemy was universally thought to hold out the promise of no less wealth The ultimate triumph of science was achieved when its powers revolutionized the material and economic world and created everywhere new physical and wealth-producing faculties. As thought, as a contribution to the interpretation of the world, as a weapon of the intellect, no order of ideas could have

aroused more rancorous detestation; no abomination could call more clearly for vigorous and ruthless stamping out. But its material gifts could not be rejected. It laid golden eggs Even that most detestable and pernicious of all offences to custom-thought and power-thought had perforce to be tolerated, to be to some extent respected, to be in some excruciating manner 'reconciled' with, and reluctantly and painfully accepted

As with modern science as a means of utilitarian discovery and invention, so it has been from the very first with every step of material progress Whatever the sanctity of custom, whatever the shuddering horror with which any departure from its hard and fast established precedent is regarded, the sacrilege is excused, the horror is silently overcome whenever a clear material advantage presents itself The tale is told how the Dyaks of Borneo, whose cross-grain method of felling trees was held as ritually sacred and not to be departed from save under dire penalty, adopted the European way of cutting out wedges *when no one was looking* In the same manner has every utilitarian inventive sacrilege prevailed The discovery of the means of producing fire was adopted, though silent disapproval was signified by colleges of priests and vestals continuing to tend the sacred hearth Metals were adopted, though a protest was lodged by continuing to use stone tools for all ritual purposes, sacrifices, circumcision, embalming The invention of the bow and arrow was adopted, though it was denounced as a weapon only fit for treacherous cowards like the 'insulting archer' Paris, just as firearms were adopted though 'an invention of the devil,' destructive of all nobility and chivalry

Nor is the disruptive action of material inventions by any means confined to the mere fact of their acceptance, its effect extends in far-reaching and undreamed-of consequences As the industrial revolution brought about by modern science has transformed not only the material, but every aspect of the social and mental world, redistributing all powers and authorities, and hurling successive tides of destructive criticism against all established values and systems of thought, so almost every

new invention has in all ages been the cause of a similar world-shaking revolution. The domestication of animals dealt the death-blow to totemic society, and probably led the way to animistic anthropomorphism. The bow and arrow, the metals, upset every balance of power, changed the laws of human distribution on the planet, and raised the issues between war-lord and priest that shall lead to Canossa and Kulturkampf. The perfecting of writing made large empires possible Navigation made and unmade them, created and transformed cultures. Agriculture changed the face of the earth and of human relations more completely than did steam and electricity

Material progress is the product of rational thought, and of it alone

Of all fields of human activity, that of mechanical advance is the only one where rationality does not admit of being trifled with You cannot introduce the gentle arts of sophistry and self-deception into a mechanical device Your machine is absolutely impervious to the influence of fine theories, sacrosanct conventions, high, consecrated sentiments. All the subtle misrepresentations, the conspiracies of silence, the eloquent appeals to prejudice, the plausible phrases, the bland casuistries, which have such fine scope in every other field of human thought, are here rudely and inexorably debarred A machine is an irreclaimable rationalist It is obdurately and shockingly indifferent to the obvious distinctions between respectable and vulgar, moral and immoral opinions. It refuses to be bamboozled There is no orthodoxy or heterodoxy in mechanics, there is no conscience clause, there is utter disregard of the sacred rights of opinions entitled to respect, of the susceptibilities of tender feelings Hence the horror of certain minds for machinery; hence are the words 'mechanical' and 'mechanism' the worst terms of obloquy in the language. If you wish to obtain a certain mechanical result, you must strictly and absolutely, and with no saving phrases or reservations, conform to facts as they are If you do not it is your own loss. your machine will not work.

II

DIFFUSION AND CROSS-FERTILIZATION

All those conditions by which progress has been promoted have either been opportunities of leisure for the development of thought, and of power for its embodiment in action, or have brought about its diffusion and the interaction of its products Of the action of the former class of conditions we shall presently have occasion to note examples , the latter constitute by far the most important and potent agency by which human advance has been aided.

The development of the means by which thought is communicated, recorded, transmitted, and disseminated, marks the broad outlines of the course of human evolution Articulate language, writing, and printing, are the three cardinal milestones in the growth of the means of progress The effect has in each case been precisely comparable, relatively to the collective organism of the race, to that of the growth of more extensive fibrillar connections between the nervous elements of the brain, which constituted the physiological aspect of man's emergence. There is good ground for believing that speech was a comparatively late development in the evolution of primitive man, and it doubtless brought about an unrecorded revolution in the far-off ages of prehistory as momentous as did the development of writing in Egypt and Babylonia, its simplification in Crete and Greece, the introduction of paper by the Arabs and the invention of the printing press in modern Europe Each was a further stage in the establishment of a nervous system bringing thought into contact with thought, linking up the operations of individual minds, opening up innumerable circuits of mental reaction, laying human thought and opinion bare to the fertilizing sun and weather of criticism, discussion, opposition, and public judgment ; diffusing over wider spheres and building up the common consciousness of humanity

In like manner has every development of the means of travel been marked by a leap in the rate of

advance First the great land migrations, the advent of Neolithic races, the invasions of the bearers of brass and of iron , then the rise of seafaring with the Minoans, its inheritance and development by Phœnicians and Greeks, its further momentous extension at the time of the rebirth of Europe by the Arabs, which, as Minoan seamanship had led to Greek culture-contacts and growth, brought about the new era of Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian navigation, and the expansion of Europe to the four continents. Finally the abolition of distance in the modern age

Even the great wars of conquest which we have grown to regard as the supreme scourge of a martyred world, which, for us, are no longer enhaloed in the splendour of apotheosis and glory, and emblazoned with the pomp of pageantry, but appear, on the contrary, as apocalyptic visions of devastation and death, riding amid conflagration and ruin, famine and pestilence, over the mown corpses of a slaughtered humanity—have, as a matter of fact, been factors of progress of the first moment, tearing down the barriers of fatal isolation, forcibly bringing together the scattered members of humanity, and diffusing the heritage of thought The Persian empire welded the Asiatic cultures, the Alexandrian empire created the Hellenistic world and fertilized it for ever , the Roman empire furnished the indispensable condition of all subsequent progress and made the modern world possible , the Napoleonic wars awakened Europe from its feudal and dynastic slumbers, gave it new life and a new consciousness, and initiated a new phase of its growth

Everywhere we see progress born of the conjunction and cross-fertilization of cultures, from the clash of outlooks and ideas Under the dominant obsession of the racial view of history the doctrine has been put forth that success in civilization is the result of the intermixture of races What ground or logical pretext there is for such a hypothesis Heaven and Professor Petrie only know ! It is suggested, I suppose, by some remote reminiscence of the process of reproduction in certain flowering plants. The facts belie it at every turn , for, while there is no such thing as a 'pure' race, we find races of re-

latively conspicuous 'purity' as foremost contributors to progress alongside of the most obviously 'mixed' races, and vice versa. The ancient Greeks, the greatest builders of civilization, were, in spite of views to the contrary arising out of the multitude of tribal names, of no more significance than the term Æolians, a comparatively pure race, while the mediæval and modern Greeks, perhaps the most striking example of falling off from ancestral excellence, are profoundly heterogeneous The Egyptians, the Chaldæans, the Romans, the Japanese, are all comparatively 'pure' races The Sicilians, the Spaniards, the Balkan peoples, none of whom appear, as races, as prominent contributors to civilization, are extreme examples of 'mixed' races For most of those, on the other hand, to whom 'purity' of race is the 'open sesame' of human evolution, the tall, long-skulled, fair-haired, blue-eyed northerner is the ideal bearer of all the world's achievements and values, and it is rightly agreed that this incomparable human stock is to-day, and has for ages been found in its greatest purity in the Scandinavian peninsula, an extremely estimable country which, however, there appears no reason for numbering among the leading lights of human progress It is not from the intermixture of races that, in some recondite, unintelligible manner, cultural development and human achievement arise, but, for very obvious and apprehensible reasons, from the intermixture and cross-fertilization of cultures, of civilizations, of ideas

III

SEGREGATED EVOLUTION

It is a direct consequence, the most momentous consequence, of the peculiar mode of transmission of the

products of human evolution, that that evolution cannot proceed in a sporadic, isolated, segregated form, by way of individuals, of races, of states or nations, of civilizations, of esoteric and class cultures Nothing short of the co-ordinated growth of humanity as a whole can satisfy the conditions of the process

In every form of evolution active progress is at work in a limited minority only, there is somewhere a growing-point which is but an infinitesimal fraction of the whole. So that, as Sir Henry Maine puts it, "progress is the exception, stagnation is the rule." But that exception is itself a rule in this sense, that it is always there All evolution from the amœba, from the nebula onward, is the outcome of exceptions, of minorities, the whole world is the product of the millionth seed It is that exception, that minority which is the determining fact of the universal process.

The same is, in a sense, true of human, as of all evolution It is the direct work of a few races, of a few individuals in those races But here the peculiar character of human evolution and of its means comes into play The reproductive bearer of its products is the whole human world, and, as a consequence, with every limitation which that reproductive function suffers, a corresponding fatal injury and disability is inflicted upon the process of development itself

The operation of that law is inexorable It is no exaggeration to say that to neglect and defiance of it every failure whatsoever in the process of human development, every disability and every disaster, every misbirth of history, and the bulk of human suffering, incapacity and folly, are primarily and directly due The law is manifested under two forms which, although aspects of the same necessity, differ conspicuously in their historical appearance, according as the sporadic and isolated evolution is that of (1) a social group, a state, a nation, or (2) of a section or class

The evolution of tribal communities is rigidly limited, it can only take place up to a certain sharply defined level which constitutes an impassable boundary. Unless

a complete change of social organization comes to be effected, unless nomadic or semi-nomadic tribes subsisting by the chase, by pastoral pursuits, and rudimentary forms of agriculture, outgrow those conditions, become transformed into settled communities and fused into larger groups, their development is strictly confined to a definite level of culture, presenting strikingly similar features and characterized by exactly similar achievements wherever met with, and which is never overstepped. If they continue in that state, if no circumstance take place to change it, if they remain isolated from contact with organized nations, they remain savages, doomed for ever to arrested growth in that condition, like the tribes which European expansion has met with all over the world, who at an early stage became cut off from those regions where civilization has developed It has been shown by Mr. Sutherland [1] that to the numerical size of such tribal groups there corresponds a definite grade of primitive culture, that, other things being equal, the degree of development of a human group, its control over the conditions of life, is a function of its numbers.

But the intrinsic development of a society, however civilized, apart from the interaction between it and other civilized societies, is no less strictly limited. No isolated human civilization has ever proceeded through its own unaided forces beyond a given limit. The time comes very speedily when that limit is reached, and complete arrest and stagnation take place.

Of such secluded growth the civilization of China is, of course, the flagrant instance. Nor, certainly, is it one towards which we can afford to be merely contemptuous. Its isolation, however, was never so complete as from our own exclusive western standpoint we are prone to conceive. Wrapped in dense obscurity as are its origins, they derived, we may well suppose, from more than one focus, even if we look no farther than the vast East-Asian expanses that were first in the third century B.C. brought under the sway of the Ts'in and Hang dynasties; two such distinct cradles at least we discern on the upper reaches of the Hoang-ho and Yang-tse respectively

[1] *Origin and Growth of the Moral Instinct*

It has been sought to connect those beginnings with those of Western Asia, of Babylon, for instance; there is no solid evidence in support and none absolutely exclusive of such conjectures. But from the West, China was never in earliest times cut off. Schliemann found in the Second City of Troy an axe of white jade that could only have come from China Chinese wares, silk, iron, furs, figured in the marts of Babylon. From the Greek kingdom of Bactria, much, we know, passed into China, music, mathematical instruments, water-clocks, viticulture, and much else doubtless of which we have no record. As far back as we can look a brisk trade is plied between the China coast and India, and through the latter with Arabia, Syria, Egypt In the second century we hear in Chinese annals of Syrian traders, and of a certain King An-Tun who sent some kind of mission there in A D 166, whose name it is not difficult to re-translate 'Antoninus' Intercourse with Rome followed at first chiefly the immemorial land-route through Parthia, which had been that of Persian commerce, later the sea-route prevailed and Alexandria was the emporium. The development and productiveness of China appear closely to follow those periods of widest contact with Bactria, Parthia, India, and the Roman West, and it reached its cultural apogee under the Sz-ma rulers of the third century, from which time dates also, as a political doctrine, its purposive isolation and the cessation of its growth. There remains the broad fact that our most conspicuous example of segregated development furnishes likewise our by-word for cultural arrest and doddering stagnation.

No society can continue in a state of progressive civilization in the midst of savage, uncivilized races, unless it can put an end to that situation by conquering them and imparting to them its own civilization A mere island of culture in the midst of a sea of barbarism is a physical impossibility. It must either destroy its barbarian neighbours or absorb them and raise them to its own level, or else be overwhelmed and absorbed by them.

But the power of a civilized community to overcome,

or even successfully hold its own against barbarian neighbours necessitates and constitutes an intolerable drain upon its power of culture and development. War-like spirit, military virtues, discipline, the qualities which make for success and efficiency in the employment of force, are directly opposed to those which make for civilization and rational development. They are part of the organic struggle, of animal competition. Civilization requires the elevation of the race above the level of that struggle; truly human evolution presupposes the setting aside of mere animal evolutionary strife. In proportion as a community is qualified for success in the one sphere, it is by so much disqualified in the other. Civilization, it is true, may furnish more effective weapons of warfare and more efficient organization; but even the possession of those advantages cannot free a community from the necessity of directing its developmental energies and resources into the channel of military efficiency instead of that of rational growth. It is a current commonplace that civilization saps the 'manly' qualities upon which military success and expansion depend. Of course it does; it 'saps' all the barbaric characters in human nature. The military spirit is no part of civilization, is not compatible, is in direct conflict with it. We constantly read in ancient history of communities succumbing "owing to growing corruption." But that 'corruption' means exactly the same thing as what we call civilization. We are a thousand times more 'corrupt' than Sibaris, or Rome at any stage. Ancient writers called civilization 'corruption' because it did corrupt the martial qualities of a people. All civilization when menaced by barbarism is in that sense 'corrupt.' Civilizations fall before barbarism because they are too civilized. And, on the other hand, barbarism falls too in the end, because it gets more and more barbarous. Babylon fell because it was too civilized to fight; Nineveh fell because it ate up all its industries and agriculture to feed its militarism.

In that fact lies one cause of the 'decay and fall of empires.' The empires and kingdoms of the

ancient East were constantly seized and subjugated by more barbaric and warlike neighbours But the invader was generally in a position to absorb the civilization of the conquered, a civilization which, as we shall see, had already come to a standstill from other causes The whole Græco-Roman world was destroyed because, large as it seemed, it was but an island of civilization in the midst of a barbaric humanity Europe was once within an ace of becoming a province of China, and is still thought by some to be menaced by a 'yellow peril'—a phrase, by the way, coined by William Hohenzollern That, however, is an illusion, because, in absorbing Western ideas, Eastern races invariably adopt them in their higher and more advanced form, disdaining the effete ones whose influence survives in the lands of their origin, and they are therefore too wise not to perceive very clearly the futility of mere war-made empires The whole of Western civilization is at the present moment reeling under the effects of the most titanic struggle of forces in all history, because one community in its midst retained in its ruling classes the barbaric conceptions of the Middle Ages, and its robber-barons have held in their grip, and trained a people eminently capable of high culture, to the ideals of the age of Barbarossa

In proportion as a community is under the necessity of cultivating those ideals does it remain barbaric at heart And not only is it doomed sooner or later in the course of human evolution to suffer humiliation and perish by the sword, but whatever civilization it may attain to is inevitably warped and falsified by the all-pervading lie of its patriotic glorification of self and of might

In proportion as a civilization shuts itself off behind a wall of national pride and isolation is its growth stunted and condemned, in proportion as it lives in free and constant intercourse with its neighbours and with all the world does it progress and thrive.

Human evolution requires not only advance but expansion That civilization is almost invariably the highest which covers the widest area on the map.

Every great civilization, the Greek, the Roman, the Arab, the European, has developed simultaneously in value and extension. By virtue of the ineluctable necessities inherent in the nature, character and methods of human evolution, the ideal of an independent and segregated human group, of a society developing by itself and for itself, of a national civilization, of an empire, of a state, is not only factitious, an artificial 'cold monster,' it is, whether we like it or no, an unrealizable impossibility. It is a contravention of the laws of human development, which repudiate, ignore, and foredoom it, and operate by way of humanity as a whole as the heir and transmitter of its evolutionary products, ignoring all other groups and units.

The second form of sporadic evolution, that confined to a class within the social aggregate, is of even deeper import in the history of human development. It is a feature common in a greater or lesser degree to all societies which have hitherto existed, and constitutes to a large extent those 'germs of decay' which give countenance to the fallacy that all societies necessarily run through a cycle of growth, maturity, and decadence. We shall have to consider the effects of that condition under various aspects in the following pages; the processes to which it gives rise constitute the fundamental feature of human development in its most essential aspect, in what is known as the ethical aspect, and will form the subject of the third part of the present work.

The inevitable result of that sporadic class-evolution is what I have already referred to as power-thought.

Whatever the convention upon which the power of a ruling class is founded, be it religious, political, social, intellectual, racial, or economic, it exercises its inevitable limiting influence upon the entire culture associated with it. But power-thought, by its falsification of and opposition to rational thought, not only fetters the general growth of the social organism, it no less fatally sterilizes the development of the very class whose power

it is its object to promote No culture which is the product and privilege of a class can continue in that form The ideal of an exalted ruling class achieving human progress by means of, and at the expense of an excluded slave class, that ideal so brilliantly revived in our own day by Nietzsche, is an impossibility, a conception which runs counter to the ineludible laws which govern human evolution If a master class achieves complete control over a slave class, it must end in stagnation, because the conditions of that control require an ever increasing subservience of the moments of progress to their maintenance, the development is from the first deflected and distorted by the necessity of maintaining existing conditions, the entire fabric of the human world is shaped and coloured, not by rational thought, not by pure desire for truth and for true progress, but by the artificial interests, the inviolable foundations of the privileges of the ruling class And the domination of those motives, like a parasite on a noble tree, entirely stifles and supplants the progressive impulse The entire culture of the ruling class, whatever force and noble qualities it may once have possessed, swiftly degenerates into a dead world of mere formulas and shams, all sincerity, all sense of truth and justice, every element of vitality departs from it If it continues to exist, if no force comes to sweep it away entirely from the world, it lives only a mummified life If, on the other hand, the control, the subjection of the servile class is not complete, if that class is not rigorously excluded from the mental world of the master class, the progressive impulse sets to work in the subjected class also Its operation acts against the existing order of things The falsification of the cultural elements of the threatened master class becomes even more pronounced, the intensity of the bias produced by its interests is proportionate to the forces which menace them It is determined to see things as they are *not*, and consequently becomes totally unadapted to things as they are And the conflict which is set up can only end in the subversion of the existing order.

Those are the 'seeds of decay' which many suppose

to reside in every culture They are present wherever that culture and its advantages are not diffused through the entire social body, but are correlated to the interests of a group of individuals to whose development the lives of the majority are rendered subservient That injury to one portion of the social body reacts upon the whole, the collective organism cannot be healthy when one part seeks to thrive to the detriment of another Both suffer equally, the dominance of the one is bought at the expense of its own deterioration Such an organism violates the conditions of organic existence, and the nemesis is that it must also violate the conditions of human adaptation and development It cannot develop by the force of rational thought, but strives to live by stifling the operation of that force It is in the nature of things foredoomed

That 'honesty is the best policy' is an adage repeated with uncertain conviction That truth is the best policy is a law of human development, the necessary consequence of man's situation in the world Everything which makes for that truth will promote his successful adaptation, everything which tends to vitiate his judgment and deflect his mind from its function will inevitably result in inadaptation to the facts amongst which he lives, and check his power of evolution Throughout the entire course of human culture, the vitality, the power, the energy, the worth, the success of a civilization, mean its sincerity, its honesty of thought, senility, decay, corruption, the doomed and downward path, mean mendacity and dishonesty

PART II

THE GENEALOGY OF EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION

CHAPTER I

THE SECRET OF THE EAST

When nomadic humanity in search for pastures came upon the alluvial plains of the great Asiatic water-courses, and discovered that, with but little labour, bounteous nature yielded abundant winter food for cattle —and, it soon occurred, for men also—it ceased to wander, became agricultural and settled into permanent abodes From the slime of the Jaxartes, the Ganges, the Yang-tse, the Euphrates, and the Nile, civilization was born Nature afforded leisure, relieved man from the hand-to-mouth struggle for food, leisure gave opportunity for thought and device

But the same conditions which gave permanent abode and secure sustenance, furnished likewise the occasion of new struggles In a community that lives on fish or game no decided advantage can accrue to any individual or group from domination over the rest, under purely pastoral conditions the cattle is the common property of the tribe, and, while one tribe may steal another's herds, there is neither inducement nor facility for individual appropriation from the common flock But where the land itself, permanently occupied, is the source of sustenance and wealth, where the needful work can be performed as well by the labourer working for another as for himself, where leisure renders surplus production possible, the advantages to be derived from power wielded over man, and from individual possession, are obvious and substantial The claim to ownership of the soil, if it can be made good places the owner in possession of men also and their labour

The influence of the medicine-man, the magician, the priest, the relatives and representatives of the god, on whose incantations and rituals, more even than on human care, the fertility of the soil is believed to depend—that influence assumes with the agricultural people enormous proportions And it is thus—not through any racial 'genius for religion'—that the Asiatic and Nilotic lands of rivers have ever been the great brewing-vats of religious fermentation, and that the map of the alluvial plains of Asia and North Africa is also that of the cradle of every religion, save one, that has counted in the world Is man naturally and incurably predisposed to put his trust in mummeries and magic rites to make corn and cabbages grow, rather than in hoeing, and ploughing, and sowing, as our anthropologists labour to impress on us? It appears somewhat incredible But any disposition towards such a notion would, we may be sure, not be unduly discouraged by the representatives of the corn-god, and they would with greater authority and nimbler fancy than the simple boor, prescribe and develop rituals and mythologies

The fact that has most impressed the diggers and decipherers of that early civilization, the form of which has but lately been emerging from the mounds of Mesopotamia, is the magnitude and all-pervasiveness of its piety Accustomed as we are to the unity of religion and of life in all primitive cultures, early Babylon transcends all examples It cannot for a moment escape from the orbit of religious thought You cannot take a step in that magic circle, move a shovelful of earth, make a brick, eat a mouthful, take a breath, give a sneeze, without being brought into direct contact with the supernatural That is the atmosphere in which the oriental mind has been formed

The fertile alluvial soil is a gift of the god, "the earth is the Lord's," the Lord is the landlord, and rent accordingly, first-fruits and tithes, must be paid to him Payment of rent is one of the most essential and efficient propitiatory rituals The priest, the family of the god, pay rent to themselves Hence one inevitable genesis of landed ownership

The representative of the god was not backward in using his advantage he bled the people white Here is, for instance, a little memorandum which we happen to have picked up of fees due to a Sumerian priest for reading the burial service over one of his flock and consigning him to mother-earth—" Seven urns of wine, four hundred and twenty loaves of bread, one hundred and twenty measures of corn, a garment, a kid, a bed, and a seat "

Between agricultural communities scattered along the banks of the great rivers disputes inevitably arise, chiefly in regard to grazing grounds, which remain communal, and, as more land is brought under tillage, extend further and further afield Provision must be made for protection and refuge . that afforded by the sanctuary of the god is wisely supplemented by an enclosure of strong walls The home of the community becomes a walled city

Of such kind are the settlements we meet with everywhere at the dawn of civilization in eastern lands, dotted over the plains of Mesopotamia, for instance In the course of tribal warfare adjoining city-states tend to fuse under the sway of the strongest, paying tribute to the dominant chief, the steward of the god, the *patesi*, as he is called, and little kingdoms arise with varying fortunes around Kish and Lagash, Eridu and Ur of the Chaldees Ultimately the inevitable fate of the cities of the plain, undelimitated by natural frontiers, is to form mighty empires stretching from the rising to the going down of the sun, witnessing to the glory of a priest-king, the offspring of the high gods Thus did Eannatum of Lagash and Sargon of Agade "pour forth their glory over the world," and Sumu-abu and Khammurabi weld Sumer and Akkad into the first Babylonian Empire So in Egypt the Horus-Lords of Abydos absorb adjoining tribes and extend their kingdom to the Fayum, till Narmer, subduing the Delta people, whose culture owing to proximity of Babylonian influences is more advanced, unites the Nile Valley under his sway The cupidity of warlike hill and desert tribes is also necessarily excited by riparian prosperity , high-

landers from Elam, periodic waves of wild Bedâwin from the desert, Akkadian, Canaanite, Aramæan Semitic swarms, Kassite horsemen, and the terrible Hittite from Cappadocia, come sweeping down over the promised land, the mother of civilization But all those inroads have little other effect than to extend and spread her beneficent influence The conditions remain unchanged In vain the gods of Babylon are carried away to the hills, their power remains with the rivers and their priests Semite may supplant Sumerian, but the priest and his civilization remains and absorb the wild conqueror When the warrior attempts to throw off the spell, to take power into his own strong hand, when the Shalmanesers and Asshurnasirpals, and Sennacheribs, the lords of Calah and Nineveh try, like mediæval emperors, to shake off the dominance of the arrogant priests of Asshûr and Babylon, to oppose their privileges, to question their immemorial claim to exemption from taxation, to lay hand on the temple lands, they find themselves in the end worsted, till the Assyrian empire, excommunicated and abandoned by all, goes down before the Mede amid the curse of the nations And when, in another age, the Greek Xenophon marches astonished through the ruins of Nineveh, his guides are unable to tell him the name which they once bore

With territorial extension goes a corresponding increase in the character of despotic power The original theocratic rule of the patesi, the vicar of god, great as it was, holding the awed and helpless multitude at its mercy, becomes even more superhuman as it stretches over vast regions The kings of Babylon and those of Memphis gathered millions of men from every part of their dominions to build a temple-palace or a pyramid

A somewhat unpleasant admission has to be made That inevitable sequence of events, that absolutism of the great empires of the morning-lands, that wholesale subjugation of human herds, that unresisted tyranny which was founded in the very heart of the slave, in mental prostration before divine power, that fearful, willing, loyal abjection, that kismet of the river-lands,

that terrible secret of the East—was the foundation, the indispensable foundation of civilization Without it Greece, Europe would have been impossible I call it an "unpleasant admission" because it would be fine to be able to say that human civilization is the child of freedom, that it is incompatible with tyranny and slavery As a matter of fact men never bethought themselves of building decent homes for themselves until they had seen gorgeous palaces and temples built with the tears and blood of thousands, they never bethought themselves of living in reasonable comfort until they had witnessed the opulence and luxurious orgies of satraps and kings, they never bethought themselves of controlling the forces of nature till herds of human chattels under the kurbash of their slave-drivers had dug canals and artificial lakes, embanked rivers, and quarried mountains, they never knew scientific curiosity, the powers of the mind, the greatness and might of knowledge, the glories of intellect before leisured parasite-priests created culture Totally emancipated for the first time from the material organic struggle, commanding the resources of the land, commanding inexhaustible supplies of forced labour ready at hand to carry out their will, the priests of Sumer and Babylon and Egypt devised, contemplated, thought, discovered, they brought forth architectural and pictorial arts, crafts, industries, taught men to chisel stone hammer and inlay metals, glaze pottery and tiles, blow glass, weave rich fabrics and impart to them gorgeous dyes, they laid the foundations of mathematical and mechanical knowledge, measured the land, divided the year, mapped out the heavens, traced the course of the sun and planets through the zodiacal belt, they invented writing committed vast stores of knowledge and experience to innumerable clay tablets and papyrus rolls, formulated laws, established the foundations of all culture and civilization

Ever glorious and venerable to every lover of man must be those first outbursts of civilization and culture But behold a stranger thing than even their swift emergence out of savagery From their very

infancy they are smitten with a hidden malady They shoot up with astonishing rapidity in a dim distant age, a revelation full of light and promise, and forthwith a spell is cast upon them, their growth is arrested, their creative impulse numbed, a palsy creeps over them, they stand still, petrified They do not die, they live on and on, century after century, from one millennium to another, a charmed, weird, sepulchral life, in a trance, unchanging, as if under some awful curse

In Babylonia all native culture has produced its best, its all—save for what the fastuous power of an Asshurbanipal can impart to it of opulence—before the early days of the first Babylonian empire of Khammurabi "For the finest period of Babylonian art we must go back to a time some centuries before the founding of the Babylonian monarchy"[1] Nothing essential is added Babylonian science, which has supplied the germ of all science to the world, was exactly as far advanced in the nebulous dawn days of the Sumerian city-states as nearly four thousand years later when Greeks came to gather its crumbs As the legend which Berossus transmits to us expresses it, "Oamres," the fish-god that came out of the Arabian sea, "taught people all the things that make up civilization, and nothing new was invented after that any more"

In the isolation of Egypt the spectacle is no less striking Culture is actually more advanced under the pyramid-builders of the IVth dynasty than at any time during the three-and-a-half millenniums during which twenty-five dynasties succeeded them Not even the brief freedom of development under the heretic pharaoh Akhenaten, or the cultural contacts which under the XIIth dynasty produced Beni-Hassan and the jewellery and scarabs of the period, can recapture the first fine rapture of the art of the Old Empire. The civilization of the Theban Empire at its height, though immeasurably more wealthy and commanding vastly greater resources, falls conspicuously below that

[1] L. W. King, *Sumer and Akkad*, p. 83

of the Memphitic Empire, two thousand years older. Compare, for instance, the statue of Princess Nefert or the Sheikh al-Balàd with, say, the Ramses statues of Luxor. Compare the king's chamber of the Great Pyramid, the huge cementless ashlars between the joints of which it is impossible to introduce the blade of a penknife, masonry, as Flinders Petrie says, "only comparable to watchmakers' work," with the jerry-building of Karnak and its patchwork pillars held together by stucco If the artists of Thebes cannot match the realism of those of Memphis, and still draw their figures in that curious way, trunk and eyes front view, limbs and head in profile, it is not that they know no better and are clumsy—the artist who decorated Seti's temple at Abydos and his tomb at Thebes, is, one can see, a fine draughtsman—but the convention is too sacred to be broken

Our engineering and mechanical skill is the lineal successor of that of Egypt, and yet to this day the fellah and Kurdish peasant plough with the same wooden share as their forefathers at the dawn of time, the Nile air reverberates to the sounds of creaking shadoofs and sakyahs as it did five thousand years ago, and the snap-shot of the modern tourist reproduces the same scene as the mastabas of Sakkâra, the peasants of the Tigris Valley sail down-stream in those funny round leather tubs which carry two men and a donkey, and return home with the leather boat packed on the donkey's back, just as Herodotos saw them, and as they had done long before the official 'creation of the world.'

The 'unchanging East,' the 'oriental mind'! It is no racial disease Sumerian, Semite, Egyptian, Iranian, Indian Aryan, Mongol, Tartar, all have in like manner succumbed to it It is the doom attaching to all the civilizations which have been bred from the silt of the Asiatic streams, the fatal gift of the corn and river gods Culture and civilization is in all of them the outcome of the ascendancy which the spontaneous, seemingly miraculous bounty of nature gave to the sacerdotal dispensers and controllers of those gifts, and to the absolute intellectual domination of the conse-

quent systems of thought The East has been 'unchanging' for the simple reason that everything that exists in it is sacred, and to touch it is, therefore, sacrilege

Chaldæan civilization is the oldest that we know It is not only the type of the development of all eastern phases of culture, but the focus whence that type has imposed itself on the oriental world The culture of the Sumerian city-states became that of Babylon and Asshûr In what measure it influenced that of Egypt is still a discussed point The military empire of Assyria, diffused it far and wide among the motley populations of Syria and Asia Minor, and through Philistine and Phœnician to Cyprus and Crete, through Babylonian traders to the uplands of Cappadocia and to Iran And when Cyrus, king of Anshan, created the Persian Empire, the successor of Nineveh, the culture of that first world-empire, which extended from the confines of China and India to Greece, and was the great political fact of the ancient world, was the civilization of Babylon writ large The Persian satrapies of India which supplied in gold-dust one-third of the revenue of the treasury of Ecbatana, and whose archers fought at Platæa, planted the Babylonian civilization of Persia in the Magadhan kingdom of the Upper Ganges, and when, after Alexander's raid, Chandragupta overthrew the Nandas, the first great Indian Empire of Maurya, which rose to its height under King Asoka, was modelled upon that of Persia, and its capital Pataliputra (the modern Patna) was a copy of Persepolis

Among the offthrows of Chaldæan culture was the great Jew Bible, whose poetry and myths, captives repatriated by Cyrus brought with them from Babylon together with the deep Chaldæan religious fervour To the elevating influence of Persian conceptions were, we like to believe, partly due those high developments which the ancient thought of the venerable mother-culture of the land of Shinar underwent at the hands of the tribesmen of Beni-Israel Not to any such causes as Professor Falta de Gracia would invoke, who

so absurdly conceives that, "While among the gentle Chaldæans each tribal god was in the habit of paying courtesies to the gods of neighbouring tribes, inviting them to the inauguration of any new temple, providing them with side-chapels, the Israelitish Bedâwin were, after the collapse of the trumpery little kingdom they had set up, so maddened with impotent rage and bruised pride, that their *nebi* were moved to declare that no other god but Yaveh should be worshipped, and, in order to ensure against his being carried off by indignant neighbours, they abolished his seven-horned images and fetish stones, and decreed the suppression of all pictorial arts Thus, amid the lyric hate of the prophet-bards of Judah, soaring to quite sublime heights of vituperation, was Intolerance ushered into this stricken world" The learned Professor has here, we think, allowed himself to be carried off his feet to quite uncalled-for 'sublime heights'

Early Babylon fixed for ever the mould of the eastern mind, of the Eastern World And that mould was that of theocracy, the absolute intellectual supremacy of the priest, the representative of the god, the magician, the mystic, the identification of all forms of rule and power with that original type

Theocracy in the East has not been intellectually tyrannical or coercive We do not find there the obscurantism, the holding down of thought, the perpetual warfare against intellectual revolt, which is such a familiar feature of the European world, with Greece and Rome at its back And that for a simple reason there has been no intellectual revolt The true intellectual impulse never arose at all The age-long habit of religious power-thought has sunk too deep in the constitution The only changes, the only mental contests known to the East are religious changes, religious thought can only be supplanted there by religious thought Whereas in Greece intellectual awakening and criticism of existing religious ideas took the form of 'philosophies,' of thought purely secular and intellectual, in the East on the contrary criticism

of existing religious thought, however intellectual in its inception, has invariably taken the form of 'new religions' Thus, criticism of primitive Magian religion by Zarathustra became Zoroastrianism, criticism of Brahmism by Gautama and by Mahavira became Buddhism and Jainism, the purely secular thoughts of Lao-Tsŭ became Taoism, and even the explicitly unmetaphysical moralizing of Kong-fu-tse became Confucianism

Of purely secular, clear-cut, sharply focussed thought, the oriental mind is incapable Its very languages are unfitted for the expression of precision and accuracy of thought, they have no terms for mental facts, they can only be expressed by material images To the oriental, Greek poetry is unintelligibly frigid because the motions and states of the mind are expressed by words, not by a string of metaphors, they do not know the use of inversion, they mark emphasis by repeating a thing three times over, they have no syntax, no means of expressing the varying relations and connections between thoughts, propositions are strung together like beads, and the only conjunction is 'and . and and' reiterated to infinity The human mind had to break through the gyves of such a mental conformation ere it could apply rational thought to the higher problems of its situation and destiny And that mental constitution, that incapacity which is the central fact of eastern culture, is the inevitable product of the mode of birth of that culture It is the fruit of the lordly leisure and boundless domination of a small class holding multitudes in mental submission by virtue of the religious sanction of their power Raised above all material struggles, the priestly ruling class built itself an intellectual mansion exalted above the herd But their minds were satisfied as soon as they were housed; they consecrated their home, lay down and went to sleep The mental world which they created was itself inexorably dominated by their position. Their power, their wealth, their leisure, their opportunity of intellectual achievement, their very life and being, depended upon the sanctity

attaching to that mental world, to established convention and tradition, upon the mystic prestige of its divine and consecrated character They were neither wicked nor unintelligent men, those genial priests On the contrary they were quite the most admirable and charming men of their day They were filled with a profound sense of the sacredness and worth of their mission, they were conscious of being, what in fact they were, the civilizers and teachers of mankind It was with a genuine zest and love, and, as would be said nowadays, in a reverent spirit, that they followed their intellectual pursuits, studied the heavens from the top of their *ziggurat*, or temple-towers, sought to assist the practical operations of agriculture, of land reclamation, of irrigation And what is more, they were uplifted by a strong feeling of responsibility, of moral duty They desired the welfare of the people It is quite evident from the elaborate codes of laws they devised, that they were zealously anxious that righteousness should prevail No Christian priest, no missionary to-day is filled with a more exalted ideal of his functions, with a loftier moral endeavour, than were the priests, the patesi of Babylonia

Yet all those endeavours and aspirations were fatally, involuntarily perverted and paralysed The whole momentum of thought, the whole interests of the thinker were enlisted in the cause of a tradition, and all the knowledge and wisdom they acquired was assimilated with, and pressed in the service of that convention Their most intimate thought was hemmed and deformed under the pressure of those conditions was crumpled and distorted and withered Their science was magic, their astronomy, astrology Their art was stifled by traditionalism All the products of their mind were inextricably entangled in fantastic oriental metaphor, in uncouth, misshapen dreams, swayed in grotesque mythological chimeras Their moral aspirations resulted in a world which presented but one relation, that of lord and slave; their superhuman world reflected the same relation We look in vain in all their achievements for a ray of clear thought that can strike a

responsive note in us, and make us forget for a moment the interval of time, and the difference between East and West And that desiccated, aborted world has lived on its mummified life through the ages, in senile infancy, for ever incapable of growth

CHAPTER II

THE HELLENIC LIBERATION

A TIME came when the quaint, archaic fruits of oriental culture, disseminated and transplanted among many various populations, reached certain very active and intelligent tribes of pirates These were not organized into large empires of slaves and theocratic despots, but in small clans scattered over islands and sinuous cliff-shores, and every individual had to bear to a smaller or larger extent a share of the cares, fortunes, and perils of the tribe Hence they were not under any necessity of preserving the sanctity of traditional ways Thus arose Greek thought, thus was laid the foundation of the modern world

In the midst of that day-dreaming, cataleptic Orient, at once infantile and senile, which must needs remain alien and exotic to the western mind, Greece, like her goddess Athēnē, appears to rise panoplied and full grown, and almost without a transition we find ourselves transported, as if by the stroke of her magic spear, into a modern atmosphere Between an age of dim fable and the height of Athenian intellectual splendour scarcely two hundred years have elapsed, though in reality the development of Hellas has been silently proceeding for some eight centuries

In passing from Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Judæa, into Greece, we step into a world which is actually closer to us than are the ten centuries intervening between the passing of Hellenism and the rebirth of Europe, a world which is western and modern, in which we move among the topics, problems, tendencies, discussions, criticisms, which occupy our own thought It is not merely because our intellectual heritage is Grecian that

we feel at home there, it is not merely that the structure of our ideas, of our conceptions, our modes of expression, the forms of our literature, are the progeny of Greek thought, it is because Greece owed its own life, as we ours, to the liberation of the human mind from the gyves and shackles which weighed it down in the theocratic East Greece made the European world It is inaccurate to say that she saved it from the encroaching East There was no European world There was only one form of civilization, that of the Orient, and Greece was not separated by any geographical convention from the Orient, but was as much part of it as is Constantinople Greece did not save Europe, she created it Before Greece there was no Europe, Greece brought it into being by breaking the spell, exorcizing the fatal charm which had fallen upon all human evolution.

When we turn our attention to Greek history we are not merely curiously inquiring into the annals of certain very small city-states in the Levant That history constitutes by far the most momentous grand-climacteric in the evolution of humanity The history of Greece is not a chapter in historical annals, it is a turning-point in evolution Speaking purely as a scientific anthropologist Dr Marett says, "To break through custom by the sheer force of reflection, and to make rational progress possible, was the intellectual feat of one people, the ancient Greeks, and it is at least highly doubtful if, without their leadership, a progressive civilization would have existed to-day." [1]

The phenomenon of Greece, the 'miracle of Greece' as it is often called, has appeared so marvellous that it is one of the standing puzzles of criticism to account for it In the two or three centuries of Greek activity the course of human evolution seems rather to have taken a sudden leap than followed the slow path of a process of growth Within that short space of time the intellectual power of Greece has blazed the tracks which all human thought and creation has subsequently followed in literature, in art, in philosophy, in criticism, logic, politics, so that every path which the human

[1] *Anthropology*, p 185.

mind has trod leads us, traced backwards, to Greek thought

We have in general been satisfied to fall back on the old Gordian knot method of saying that the Greeks were endowed with a wonderfully gifted disposition Professor Bury says that "we have to take that character for granted" And it is now the fashion to hint at a profound explanation by laying stress upon the mystic words 'Aryan' and 'northern races' That the 'character' of the Greeks, or to speak more accurately, the conditions of their development in those ages which preceded their emergence into the light of history, contributed to their subsequent evolution, may readily be granted But that evolution was a definite effect of the circumstances in which it took place

When the Greek tribes appeared in the Ægean region their way had already been made straight for the utilization and transformation of eastern culture Although there was no European civilization, Europe was not a world of sheer howling savagery It had attained, as we realize more and more with the progress of archeological research, as high a state of material culture as it is possible for scattered tribes and small primitive communities to attain In France, in Spain, in Italy skilful bronze-smiths and potters had long been present The great river trade-routes which were to last down till modern times were already opened up, the copper, manufactured bronze, earthenware, of Mediterranean lands were being exchanged for British tin and Baltic amber In the Ægean itself had arisen the most highly developed of those cultures Born of seafaring enterprise, of the contacts of the strong Cretan despots' far-flung fleets with every Mediterranean shore, that brilliant material culture whose labyrinthine palaces, with their monumental throne-rooms, and staircases, and bull-rings, their stuccos, and cameos, and frescoes, whose flounce-skirted ladies, and feathered page-boys, astonish us, served the momentous purpose of a half-way house for the exsurgent destinies of the Greek tribes, fitting them for the assimilation of more important elements For in the first wonder of discovery, the importance of that Minoan culture's influence

may easily be exaggerated It was a courtly culture which exploited the resources of eastern civilization and of Mediterranean local industries for the pleasure and gratification of powerful autocrats, and, while it transmitted to Greece the all-important factor of sea-power, many material and artistic suggestions, and perhaps something of its pleasure-loving, hedonistic recklessness and *insouciance*, it contained, like the similar and similarly formed Tyrrhenian culture, whose last remnants died out with Etruscan power, no great intrinsic element of new progress, nor aught of what makes up the distinctive qualities of Greece Greece does not hold the place it does in the history of humanity by virtue of its pottery or of the type of its decorative designs Minoan civilization could not transmit what it did not possess

The most important dowry of Minoan civilization to Greece was its ships Drawn over a sea-way made easy by countless stepping-stones, and which brought him at the end of every radius of his course in touch with an existing civilization, the Greek became a sea-rover, and, like his national hero, Odysseus, "many men's cities he saw and learned their mind" He mixed and competed with the merchants of Tyre and Sidon, he met Babylonian caravans in the bazaars of Lydia and Synope, he went as merchant or mercenary to Syria and to Egypt, fought in the armies of Nebuchadnezzar and sacked Jerusalem, in the armies of the Pharaohs and scratched his name on the colossi of Abû-Simbel, met Phrygian, Lydian and Assyrian And when Persian power gathered up all the old civilizations of the Orient, the Greek was in daily, close, and by no means always unfriendly relation with the great cosmopolitan empire He absorbed every culture of the Eastern world The first book of history published in Greece was not a history of Greece, but of all the 'barbarians' whom the Greek found so very interesting, and, in a later age, Plutarch wrote a pamphlet to vent his patriotic indignation against Herodotos, who was a shameless 'pro-barbarian' to an extent quite inconsistent with respectable patriotism

But all those varied culture-contacts would have availed little—they were little more than Phœnician and Minoan had enjoyed—had they not worked upon a material of new quality. The Greeks were, as none of those people had been, almost completely protected from the influence of tradition and from every form of power-thought. Therein lies the differentiating character of the reaction. No sacredness attached in their eyes to the culture which they took over from Cretan and Mycenean. And those with which they came into relation through their intercourse with Persian, Phœnician, Egyptian, Babylonian, were approached with curiosity, interest, acquisitiveness, but with no superstitious reverence.

When the Greeks came under those influences they were in that primitive tribal phase of society which, in culture and organization, is very much the same wherever it is met with, whether among Germanic tribes, or American Indians, or Central African, or Polynesian tribal communities. It has, of course, nothing to do with race, but is a culture phase necessarily common to all races before the establishment of large fixed communities and agriculture. The older writers like Robertson and Guizot were deeply struck with the resemblance between the social condition and character of the ancient Germans and those of the Red Indians, the only surviving tribal communities then at all well known, and someone even wrote a book to prove that the Redskins were Germans. Only the blinding tradition of elegant pseudo-classicism has prevented the same likeness from being perceived sooner in the Homeric Greek, and the pictures of the *Iliad* from being at once recognized as obviously taken from Fenimore Cooper's novels.

Their clans, genoi, phratries, were not, as Grote and Maine have imagined, groups of families, but family groups, in a state of transition from matriarchal kinship, group-marriage, exogamy, and tribal communism, to the patriarchal state. Large constituted interests, class privilege and government, traditions of absolutism, were then wholly unknown to them. Their 'basileis' were never, either then or later, 'kings' at all in the sense which the title has acquired, but war-chiefs, subject

to the natural authority of the whole tribe convened in councils, in which the people were influenced in their decisions not by the power or prestige of authority, but by the tongue of their orators or demagogues, and where they signified their approval or dissent by murmurs or shouts and the rattling of their spears on their shields All our 'histories of Greece' are rendered thoroughly unintelligible by the notion that Greece began with 'monarchies' At most the measure of authority acquired by their chiefs, was that exercised by the leader of a band of pirates who holds his power at the discretion of his men. In Homer the word 'basileus' does not mean 'king,' but 'prince', there are families of basileis in every tribe That power tended continuously to dwindle, the basileus became the archon, at first elected for life, then decennially, finally annually And it is strikingly characteristic that, while in the riparian civilizations of the East the priestly function developed into the paramount autocracy of kingly despotism, among the Greek tribes the kingly war-leader sank into the insignificant office of the priest, the second archon, as in Rome he became the *rex sacrificulus*

The spirit of tribal democracy was never supplanted by the spirit of monarchy, by courtly abasements, reverential awe, divine right, 'loyalty' The Greeks did not invent democracy, as our school histories supposed, they never had occasion to abandon their original condition of tribal democracy What they did was to endeavour to maintain that original democratic state under civilized conditions, in spite of all the factors which, amid wealth and culture, make for class privileges and usurpation

There were plenty of attempts to establish privilege and oppression in Greece Eupatrid claims, 'tyrannoi' The earlier—and much of the later—history of Greek cities is entirely taken up with struggles against desperate efforts of various powers to establish themselves, with the checkmating of attempts at usurpation. But those very struggles testify to the untamed force of the primitive equalitarian spirit The constitution of Solon was necessitated by the most terrible condition of plutocratic

ascendancy The Athenian merchants, enriched by the eastern trade, held the whole agricultural land and the farmers themselves in the grip of their mortgages But the force of old-established democracy was too strong, all debts had to be cancelled (Imagine Capital and Labour to-day agreeing to submit to the decision of a Professor Solon, and capitalists tamely submitting to expropriation !) The conditions under which the Greek people had developed did not permit of any attempt at usurpation achieving lasting success · usurpation had no power of tradition at its back , it was not 'divine' and sacred, it never had the means of getting itself sanctified and venerated it had to play its game under its own undisguised banner The Greek tribesmen had never occasion to prostrate themselves before a vice-gerent of the corn-god The 'tyrannoi' were no more tyrants than the basileis and archons were kings , they usurped the administrative and executive power by popular support and armed force, but none dared or had the power to alter the actual constitution, to claim to be 'legitimate' rulers Peisistratos enforced the laws of Solon, and even made them more liberal , the only means of power which those usurpers had, was to please the people In passing from barbaric communism to civilization, the Greeks never lost the spirit of their equalitarian condition And the height of the intellectual growth of Athens coincides with a form of absolute democracy, which is, and will probably remain without parallel The 'democratic jealousy' with which the Kleisthenean constitution is almost fanatically obsessed, was bent upon preinsurance against the remotest opportunity of individual or class predominance

It is true that this superlative democracy rested on slavery, that when Attic imperialism was at its height a hundred thousand citizens were surrounded by three hundred and sixty-five thousand slaves But at a time when slavery was a universally recognized institution the condition of Attic slaves was so mild, except in the silver mines (the lot of miners is bad under all circumstances), that they never once revolted The agricultural slave was rather a farmer than a slave,

and having paid a certain fixed proportion of produce to the landlord, could do what he liked with the rest, the industrial slave assisted his master, who worked as hard as himself, and Demosthenes could claim that slaves in Attica enjoyed greater freedom than citizens in many another land Hence slavery in Athens never affected her intellectual development through any anxiety about the maintenance of power That it did not affect it by producing idleness is attested by the fact that in the time of Perikles the number of citizens who could not afford to lose a day's work to serve on the juries was so great, that he introduced the payment of jurymen As a matter of fact most of the crafts and industries of Athens were carried on by free labour, not by slaves, the former being cheaper and better No slave labour was employed in the building of the temples of the Acropolis Slavery did exercise a profoundly pernicious effect upon Greek culture, and ultimately contributed to its downfall But neither in Greece nor in Rome did it ever seriously affect the complexion of social and political thought, compel it, as in the East, to adapt itself to the interests of oppression, because the slaves were imported foreigners, a fluctuating population lying outside the social community, not oppressed citizens, not the people themselves reduced to subjection The social and intellectual questions developed in Greece between citizens and citizens, not between masters and slaves

The primitive Greeks had, like every other race, their religious traditions and customs, their rituals and their mythology, and many eastern cults became inevitably acclimatized among them But religion with the Greek tribes, as with the Norse, the Germanic, the Latin populations, stands for something altogether different as regards its character and the place it occupies in human life, from the religions of the eastern river-lands And the difference depends upon the circumstance that the whole sphere of religious thought in the East was from the first indissolubly bound up with the chief source of class power and privilege, it was the religion of a theocracy whose power and authority rested wholly upon religious ideas, and whose culture accordingly moved

exclusively within the orbit of religion Nothing of the kind occurred elsewhere. Religion as the all in all of human life, engrossing the whole of man's thought and activities, dominating supreme in every sphere, excluding every other point of view, religion in the sense in which it is still understood, is a product of the East It assumed that hypertrophic development only where the life of the people depended upon the supernatural fertility of the land, and where the priest, the representative of the supernatural power, consequently controlled every source of human existence The religious rites and beliefs of the Greeks were, like those of other people, chiefly associated with the fertility of the soil, with the operations of agriculture, with seed-time and harvest But then the Greeks were not an agricultural people Except in Thessaly, Bœotia, and Messenia, there was no good agricultural land in Greece And those districts, Thessaly the mother of witches, and Bœotia the home of oracles, always remained the most backward in Greek civilization "The goodness of the land," Thucydides significantly observes, "favoured the aggrandizement of particular individuals and thus created faction, which proved a prolific source of ruin" Attica, on the contrary, "from the poverty of its soil," enjoyed a continuous development With the Greeks the supernatural was merely an attempt at explanation, a form of speculation issued from the popular mind It was democratic, it had no vested interest at its back, no consecrated guardians watchful, with all the force of self-preservative instincts, for the inviolate protection of its sanctity The poets were at liberty and welcome to remodel traditional fables, to play with popular mythology as their fancy dictated No inevitable connection was even recognized between morality and religion; there were rites due to the gods and to the dead, but relations with the living were a matter of natural justice Clearly it would have been impossible for the sacerdotal Chaldæan or Egyptian thinker to look upon the problems of nature and of life from a purely secular point of view, to ask what the world was made of, whether of one kind of substance assuming many forms,

or of the combination of a few elementary substances, or of atoms, and what really was the nature of the changes continually taking place in the world, whether they were real or only apparent Such speculations entirely divorced from any reference to the authority of the gods could not occur to the theocrat, far less could they be put forth by him as hypotheses inviting discussion Compare the mythopoetic attitude of the oriental priest, of the Egyptian before the fact of death, with the sublime agnosticism of the dying Socrates "Whether life or death is better is known to God, and God only" From such an attitude of thought the eastern theocrat was absolutely debarred It is not, observe, that the Greek was more ingenious, cleverer, but simply that he was able to look at things secularly, that is, with his mind dissociated from the obsession of religious traditions and views For the religious Oriental that was impossible The oriental priests laid the foundations of science by their patience of observation and attention to details, and the Greeks had not patience enough for the mere observation and collection of facts and noting of details, but when it came to use and interpret facts, it was the Greek who was scientific and the Oriental who could not be so When some one brought to Perikles a ram's head with a curious single horn growing in the middle of its brow, a soothsayer was prompt with his interpretation, drawing omens and prophecies from the circumstance But Anaxagoras, who happened to be present, split the skull in two and showed how the monstrosity was the natural effect of a mal-development in the bones of the skull It was in Greece for the first time that the mind could move freely outside the charmed circle of authoritative tabus and mysticisms

Thus it was that when the Greek tribes came in contact with, and culled the fruits of the old civilizations, the civilizations of the Orient, they transformed them into a new power, a new phase of human evolution.

It was not in Greece that the Hellenic mind was formed The 'miracle of Greece' took place in Asia.

There already the sagas and 'chansons de gestes' of the Achæan tribes' heroes, and their battles in Thessaly and round Cadmean Thebes, had collected about the story of the fight for Troy which, in a later age, came to be symbolic of the opposition between Europe and Asia—a name given in Homer to a meadowland in Lydia There Greek tribes had settled on the Anatolian seaboard and the adjoining islands as far down as Rhodes and the headlands of Knidos and Halicarnassos, and been held up in Cilicia by the Assyrian troops of Sennacherib It was among migrants from Attica driven by a Dorian wave that the Greek spirit actually came to birth and full power On the fringe of that rich, oriental Lydian kingdom, whence the youth of Colophon came back, Xenophanes complained, flaunting eastern dresses in the agora and reeking with perfumes, where, at the court of Sardis, the Athenian Solon, like a country yokel, mistook each gorgeously clad courtier with his train of attendants for the king, and when the king took him round his treasure-houses and sought to dazzle him with the wealth of vases, and tripods of gold and electron, and the jewels, golden clasps and chains and pectorals, and golden sand from Tmolos, and the new device of coined money beautifully designed to his order by Ionian artists, and Babylonian carpets, and carved cedar trunks full of rich embroidered garments, the Greek refused to be impressed, to the annoyance of the king, who expected the usual hyperbolic, oriental compliments—how characteristic the whole anecdote is of the Greek attitude! —it was that semi-Asiatic Ionia which was the cradle of Greek culture, whence it harked back with trade to the Attic mainland, as also did sea-love and sea-power While Anacreon of Teos, and Alcæos, and "burning Sappho" of Lesbos "loved and sang," Greek intellect rose in the harbour-cities and islands of Ionia to the first splendour—and was it not also the best and soundest? —of its creative power. From Miletos the sea-queen at the mouth of the Menander, whose fleets plied regularly to Egyptian Naukratis, and Abydos, and Byzantium, and the Crimea, and the rest of her sixty daughter colonies, and where the caravans from Susa and Babylon

ended their journey, came Thales fully equipped with the lore of Egypt and Chaldæa, and first introduced mathematics and astronomy and philosophical speculation to Greek lands, and Anaximenes who thought all land animals, including man, were descended from fishes, and Hecataios who travelled oriental lands and wrote a description of the world half a century before Herodotos of Halicarnassos followed in his footsteps, and Anaximander who first drew maps, such as that 'brass table' with which his countryman Aristagoras astonished the Spartans when he sought to induce them to attack Lydia, "with all the seas and all the rivers set down upon it" He was said too to have "invented the gnomon," but that had been in use for ages at Babylon, and it was customary to credit the first Greek who introduced an Egyptian or Babylonian invention with its discovery just as in the Middle Ages every Arabian invention was credited to whomsoever in Europe first happened to mention or use it From 'piney' Colophon came Xenophanes railing at the gods whom Homer and Hesiod had pictured immoral, and whom oxes and horses would have pictured bovine or equine, and taught Parmenides of Elea from whom Plato learned From Clazomenæ came the great Anaxagoras who "brought Ionian science to Athens," and taught his friend Euripides 'atheism' From Ephesos came Heracleitos, that Ionian Nietzsche who in proud scorn denounced the vulgar instincts of the herd, who, like asses, preferred chaff to gold, and the man-made values which it mistook for eternal realities, while Nature and her unswerving forces of perpetual change and becoming were beyond good and evil and from the Milesian colony of Abdera came Democritos who conceived matter as composed of atoms, and from Samos Pythagoras, half scientific genius, half crank, whom tradition, perhaps too lightly dismissed, made the pupil, not only of Chaldean and Egyptian priests, but of Persian and Indian teachers

Thus was the old wine of the Orient put into the new bottles of Greek criticism and rationalism

It was that concourse of exceptionally favourable conditions which moulded those qualities of the Greek mind

by virtue of which all the evolutionary forces of the race were liberated and the world transformed The agency which brought about that leap forward of human evolution in Hellas, was the self-same agency which produced that other forward bound in the last three centuries of the modern world—unfettered criticism and rational thought

Greece built the European world, but her task was destructive as well as constructive It was not so much at Marathon, at Salamis, at Platæa, at Mycale, that Greece overcame the Orient, her chief victory over it took place in the process of her mental growth The East was beaten ere a single soldier-slave of the Great King had set foot across the Hellespont

The many-nationed hosts of Persia and her Tyrian fleets were by no means the sole, nor the chief menace which Greece had to encounter At one time the fate of Europe, the fate of human evolution had been in even more grievous peril than when Xerxes stood, with the blazing and smoking ruins of the old Acropolis behind him, "on the rocky brow that frowns o'er sea-born Salamis" A century earlier the destinies of the world had, for a moment, even more fearfully and momentously trembled in the balance And it was not the hoplites and seamen of Greece that saved them then, but a handful of gruff old men in Ionia solitarily thinking and revolving in their minds unpractical things

As the barbaric Achæan tribes grew under fertilizing contacts into the Hellenes, their myths and gods had concurrently been shedding all trace of supernatural solemnity and sinking to the level of good-humoured rustic tales Old Hesiod had only made matters worse by his endeavour to shape into a naive theology under Babylonian inspiration the tangle of popular folk-lore, and to the Homeric bards the court of Olympus was but the feudal court of a joyous Achæan chieftain and his boon-companions The native Ægean deities admitted on sufferance into the conqueror's pantheon helped

to bring discredit upon it by being allotted the parts of mere hangers-on and buffoons, the honest blacksmith Hephaistos got nothing but kicks from Zeus and a pretty wife who made him a laughingstock, the great god Pan had to take his place in the train of the young Dionysos, Hermes became a signpost to set travellers on their way To the new mind of Hellas the old tribal mythology which it had outgrown became, as a religion, utterly unadapted and unadaptable

In the world before Greece was, in the oriental world, only one thing could, under those circumstances, have happened A new, a 'higher,' more 'spiritual' religion would have evolved and taken her place at the helm of the mind of the race Had that come about there would have been no Hellenic mind as we know it, no western civilization built upon the foundation of that extra-religious development And it was in fact only by the narrowest margin that that catastrophe was averted and Europe made possible On all sides the religious ideas of the East lay, as it were, on the watch for the opportunity that offered From the dark bosom of Mother-earth, that invisible nether-world that holds the supreme mystery of fructification and generation, of the eternal recurrence of life, and death, and rebirth, arose the veiled, phantasmal shapes of the 'chthonic' deities, Dēmēter, and Persephonē, Hades, and Hecate, and Hermes psychopompos, the lords of the resurrection and the life everlasting At Eleusis, returned merchants had brought new light out of the land of Osiris, and the elect, cleansed of all impurities by ritual waters, was initiated in the Egyptian hypostyle hall of the Telesterion to the mysteries of religion, and admitted to partake of the mystic meal at which the high priest, successor and representative of Tryptolemos, raised the holy symbol of the wheat-ear, the bread of life, the body of the ever-dying and resurrecting god Eleusinian religion established itself, as we know, pretty firmly in Greek life, and all Athens set forth by torch-light on the night of the winter solstice to celebrate the feast of the Nativity

In the ruder North another god of the nether-world,

Orpheus, was in the sixth century received with ecstatic religious transports, and with him was blended the ancient Thracian Dionysos, not the Hellenized joyous Dionysos of Athens, but a transformed, mystic Dionysos, said to be connected with India, tonsured and mitred, robed in magic vestments, and bearing a staff, or cross, twined with symbolic vine, who had given his blood for the world. With him again were identified, in the commingling of myths, other dying Phrygian and Syrian gods, Zagreos, Attis, Adonis, and the Eleusinian Iacchos. The rustic population became possessed with a wild religious frenzy which led to ecstatic visions, and the dancing madness spread like an epidemic through the Greek world.

In the enthusiasm of that revival the temple priests came forth out of their obscurity and neglect, and began to speak with authority. New elaborate systems of theology were promulgated, the proper organization of religion, the union of cults, were much spoken of; the old cults were anxious to conform and harmonize; the Delphic oracles began to be given out by a woman in a state of orgiastic ecstasis. Proselytizing missionaries and preachers, metragyrtes, orpheotelestes, theophorites, went abroad teaching and preaching in the market-places, announcing the god, healing the sick, claiming "a power derived from Heaven that enables them by incantations, ceremonies, and the partaking of meals, to atone for any crime committed by the individual or his forefathers. They produce many books from which their rituals are drawn, and persuade not only single persons, but entire states, that they may be purified and absolved from sin, both in this life and after death, by the performance of certain ceremonies which they call 'Mysteries,' and which are supposed to save us from the torments of Hades, while neglect of them is punished by an awful doom."[1] One of those prophets, Onomacritos, gained considerable influence and favour at the Athenian court of Peisistratos, and was employed in the preparation of the new edition of the Homeric poems into which he managed to slip

[1] Plato, *Resp.* II 364, 365

some 'Orphic' passages He had, however, the misfortune to be caught red-handed at the old game of forging documents—some poems which he sought to father on Musæos And instead of regarding the pious fraud in a broad-minded, sympathetic way, as some quite respectable 'variety of religious experience,' the Athenians had the bad taste to pronounce him a liar and a scamp, and Onomacritos was discredited and disgraced

So indeed was, after a brief suspense, the whole Orphic religious movement It had seemed, indeed, as if Greece were on the point of being submerged, as if inevitably the dead hand of a theocracy were about to be laid upon the cradle of human thought, and the liberation of the world be for ever stifled or indefinitely prorogued. Fortunately Greek thought was already awake The names of the heroes who then saved the world were not Miltiades, Themistocles, Pausanias, but Thales, Xenophanes, Heracleitos The thinkers of Ionia had not thought and spoken in vain, they had revealed to man a new dignity and a new power in himself Against the new madness in particular, against those ignorant exploiters of ignorance, the preaching god-bearers, "the most pestilent brood I wot of," as Athenæus, a gleaner of old texts, calls them, "save, perhaps, those who go round collecting subscriptions for the Dēmēter", against all the hosts of unreason, their voice was raised in hot and indignant protest

And Greece, the better instinct of Greece, heard the summons and rallied round its thinkers Even before the people of Croton summarily put an end to the Pythagorean mystic brotherhood, Orpheus had slunk away out of sight, and Greece had peremptorily given to all mystagogues notice to quit and cease from fooling 'Of uncertainty and mystery there is, by Zeus, enough in this strange, rich life, and to spare But how shall the myths and mummeries of a barbarian priest help it, or make it less or otherwise? What can be known we shall seek to know with all the might of the honest means of knowledge whereof we dispose, and what we cannot know

we shall face fearlessly with no less honest ignorance But while power remains to the mind of Hellas, the thought of man shall at least be free, and to the generations to come, so long as they can hear her voice, Hellas shall bequeath that heritage of freedom '

When with languid, half-condescending curiosity we seek to gather from the surviving fragments and mutilated relics collected in Diels's book some notion of the ideas and conceptions, often to us somewhat naive and crude, of the early thinkers of Ionia, how many of us realize clearly, or at all, that if it is given to us to-day to face the world and its problems with open eyes, with some small measure of adequate power of clear judgment, and some armoury of accumulated knowledge and understanding, it is to those men, who to most are little more than empty names, to *them* in the first place and beyond all others who have subsequently utilized the freedom they won, that we owe it?

The Greeks were the most purely rationalistic people that ever lived They were so to a far greater extent than we are, because our modern thought has operated only by throwing off laboriously and with only partial success the superincumbent weight of accumulated tradition and prejudice, whereas with the Greeks there was virtually no such weight to be thrown off Therein lies the unique, perennial charm which pervades all Greek thought and literature In perusing it we meet with much that is crude, with some ideas that are absurd, with others which from the vantage point of our present knowledge are hopelessly erroneous and puerile, but we never come across obdurate, inveterate prejudice We always feel that we are in the presence of open minds, in which the growth of thought, the inquiring spirit, is never choked, supplanted by dead, hardened formulas, by immovable, blinding, dogmatic preconceptions Compare old Herodotus, who is by no means a Xenophanic sceptic, but on the contrary a rather pious person, with the turgid, bombastic, loyal annalists of India, Assyria, Egypt, or Judæa, who

invariably wrote thousands for hundreds, and millions for thousands, and in whom we have to excavate every fact from under an impenetrable mound of miracle-mongering and nauseating panegyric! Whenever Herodotos meets with the miraculous and supernatural, or even with patriotic exaggeration, he is filled with distrust and determined scepticism "How could a dove speak with human voice?" he asks when told the legend of the priestess of Dodona, the ravine Peneios was caused by Poseidon striking the earth with his trident, he was told, "but it appears evident to me that it is the effect of an earthquake", the Persian fleet was tossed about for three days until the Magi quelled the storm by offering prayers and sacrifices, "or else it slackened of its own accord" Even when he recounts the most glowing moments in the glories of his own people he jibs at any improbability When, for instance, he relates the story of Scyllias of Scione, the famous diver, who was said to have swum eighty stadia to give the Athenian fleet at Artemisium warning of the coming Persians, he adds simply, "If, however I may offer an opinion in the matter, it is, that he came in a boat" It is not that his intelligence was abnormally acute—was it really more acute than that of those genial and learned Egyptian and Babylonian priests with whom he conversed?—but because there were no influences in the Greek world which branded disbelief in the miraculous or in adulatory exaggerations as 'wicked' The Greek mind developed not because it had essentially more power, but because that power was not crippled

A passion for rationalism became its supreme characteristic To reason, to argue, to discuss, was their delight Politics, government had with them always meant discussion, conflicts of arguments, not ukases; and they extended the habit to every phase of life They were the first to rationalize (in the theological sense), to criticize, and to reject their own religious traditions They constructed formal logic, they reduced dialectics to a science, eloquence with them meant argument, and they worshipped eloquence above

all things ; their drama ever tended towards a pendulum swing of pros and cons Art itself, the art which produced the Parthenon—that 'syllogism in marble,' as Boutmy calls it—and Greek sculpture, was obsessed with 'canons,' modules, standards, with a desire to penetrate to the rationale of the artistic effect Ictinos, who raised on the Attic rock the beauty pure and perennial of the 'Maiden's Chamber,' wrote a treatise expounding the logical principles upon which he wrought. And the spirit of their art manifested itself in ordered regularity and symmetry, corresponding as it were to the balanced and orderly disposition of logical thought, in Olympian calm expressive of the composed serenity of detached judgment

They carried the passion for conscious, deliberate ratiocination—paradoxical as it may seem—to excess To the Greek the very form of ratiocination had a captivating and irresistible fascination No entertainment held the populace like a display of argumentative acuteness They came to delight in dialectics for their own sake A favourite exercise of their orators, was to establish a position by argument one day, and to demolish it the next They were ratiocinative even to the neglect of the foundations of rational thought, of investigation and experience of the practical methods of trial and error And thus, as we shall see more fully, they missed science and remained pre-scientific It is worth while noticing that the Greeks had not in any very high degree what we call the passion for truth, the frenzy for getting to the very root of facts, to explain, the ideal of the supreme sanctity of truth They were rather impatient of nonsense, of pseudo-explanations which are an insult to intelligence, than possessed with any high passion for truth for its own sake Cleverness, beauty, and moral beauty, they admired rather than truth, a clever plausibility would satisfy them without any too severe inquiry as to whether it was true

It is no disparagement to say that under the conditions then available, Greek thought did not at once attain to complete perfection of method and results Such as it was, it was the most marvellous efflorescence in the

evolution of the human race It was Greece who unfolded the wings of the human mind, created man *homo sapiens* anew, initiated and made possible all subsequent evolution of the race

It need cause no wonder that the career of Greece was so brief, the wonder is not that the greatness of Greece failed to maintain itself longer, but that it succeeded in maintaining itself at all It was a premature birth, only rendered possible by an exceptionally propitious concourse of circumstances The world was not in a condition to allow of any rational society, human experience was utterly insufficient to serve as an adequate basis for such an uncompromisingly rational attitude as that of the Greeks Politically they had managed to preserve the essential spirit of primitive tribal democracy throughout all the altered conditions of advanced civilization, in spite of the numberless agencies which in the ordinary course of human circumstances necessarily put an end to it They had withstood and overcome the encroachments of war-chiefs, the pretensions of nobles, the almost irresistible despotism of money-power, the corruption of foreign gold, the armed power of the Persian They had by radical and elaborate contrivances endeavoured to adapt democracy to the changed conditions But that achievement was almost a paradox, a state of unstable equilibrium which could not in the nature of things be kept up indefinitely

With some peoples decadence sets in insidiously through the operation of inherent faults which slowly creep and extend and eat them up, others lose their balance at the very height of their success, and through those very virtues and qualities that made it The latter was the case with Greece, or what is for us the same thing, Athens After the repulse of the Persians the Athenians grew intensely self-conscious of their greatness and glory and became infested with the toxæmia of jingo-patriotism Patriotism is an altruistic virtue, it means the subordination of individual self-interest to that of the community But then it all depends upon what precisely is understood by 'the community' To

be patriotic towards, say, Manchester may conceivably mean to be unpatriotic towards England. Athens was patriotic towards Athens and unpatriotic towards Greece That incurable separatism, those wanton, fatal bickerings of half a dozen trumpery villages, appear to us unspeakably foolish and absurd, and only to be explained by some peculiar 'individualistic' twist of the Greek character But that separatism and interstate anarchy were as wanton and foolish as European separatism and anarchy, no more and no less Size is merely relative and has nothing to do with the matter, the city-state was the political unit of the Greek world as the nation-state is of the European, and even in his Utopia Plato could not conceive of any other political unit A league of Greek nations, such as the Cynic and Cyrenaic philosophers advocated, was all very well before the instant menace of Persian aggression, but as a permanent order it was an unpractical dream outside the sphere of political realities It would, for one thing, mean the giving up of the command of the sea, and that, of course, was not even to be thought of So Athenians stuck to 'the empire,' and stood up for Athens first, Athens right or wrong The nemesis came sharp and swift in the quarries of Syracuse and on the sands of Ægospotami, and when the traitor Alkibiades brazenly asked the Athenians whether it would pay them better to accept Persian gold as the price of democracy, or perish utterly, they hung their heads in silence And when the Spartan Agesilaos actually went forth in one last attack against Persia, he was driven back, he said, "by thirty thousand bowmen," meaning the golden darics stamped with the figure of the Great King as an archer, with which the Greeks at home had been bribed and bought, and his recall secured

Hellas, torn and exhausted by incurable petty patriotisms and jealousies and strifes, and all the nameless corruption and ignoble selfishness and lying which such contests breed, was, it was clear to every one, fast sinking lower and lower, and the 'Peace of Antalkidas' made her virtually a subject-state of the Great King, from whom the Greek states abjectly took

their orders. The blossom was drooping and withering on its stem How long would it be before the closing tides of barbarism, which were already strangling the Greek colonies in Italy, and the irresistible power of Persia, before which, like a shivering bird hypnotized by a serpent, Hellas lay a doomed and helpless prey, would make an end of Hellenic civilization? How much of it, if anything at all, would survive? Those were obviously the only questions When, behold, a strange thing suddenly happened instead of dying, Hellenic civilization conquered the world

There were some Greek tribes—probably as purely Greek, notwithstanding Peonian and Illyrian admixtures, as the Athenians and Milesians,—who had remained in the backwaters of the Southern Balkans, cut off from the operation of the influences which produced Ionia and Hellas Note once more the true relative values of race and environment. they remained insignificant barbarians in exactly the same condition as the early Greek tribes Their mediocre little barbaric kingdom was of no account until one of their kings sought to introduce Greek culture and drew to his court artists and poets from the south, Zeuxis the famous painter, Hippocrates the physician, possibly Thucydides the historian, Timotheos of Miletos the poet and musician, Agathon the tragic poet, and another far greater and more tragic poet also, Euripides by name, a very sad and very weary old man, with his faith in humanity sorely bruised and shaken, who went thither to die, and, before dying, wrote there his swan-song, the *Bacchæ* The successor of King Archelaos who was brought up at Thebes perceived the possibilities presented by the disintegration of the Greek city-states, systematically trained an army and, after defeating Athens and Thebes at Chæronea, established a kind of 'sphere of influence' over all Greece, getting himself appointed archistrategos, or, as one might say in Latin, imperator of the Hellenes His son even more carefully educated—his chief tutor was Aristotle—landed a very efficiently trained and equipped little army, the equivalent of some four modern divisions, on the plain of Troy,

by the heroon of Achilles, scattering the satrapic armies before him at the Granicos, liberated both the willing and unwilling cities of Ionia, and after a couple of pitched battles the whole 'ramshackle empire' of Persia, the whole known world of the Near East, Asia Minor, Phœnicia, Babylon, Palestine, Egypt, lay at his feet. He pushed on beyond the limits of the known world, meeting with Chinese in Baktria, founding Kandahar[1] in the Afghan tableland, and did not stop till he had entered Lahore and Hyderabad. When he returned to rest awhile and prepare for the conquest of the West in Babylon, the old first metropolis of all civilization, submissive embassies came to the young new Dionysos to offer him the homage of the whole world, Arabs, Ethiopians, Scythians, Carthaginians, Iberians, Gauls, Etruscans, Italians from Brutium, Samnites—whether also from a little village called Rome, history does not mention. The whole world was Hellenized.

The fertilizing spirit of Hellas was spread over the whole earth for all peoples and for all times. But not in its purity. The Orient, after all, had its revenge, its terrible and fatal revenge. The conquering young Greek hero had offered sacrifice to Artemis at Ephesos, to Melkarth at Tyre, to Ahura Mazda at Ecbatana, to Ptah at Memphis, to Ammon at Siwa, to Yaveh at Jerusalem. And the Gods of the East smiled.

As in the political aspect so also in the intellectual, Greece had, before Alexander, been slowly succumbing to Persia and to pride.

She had been an eager pupil of every one who had anything to teach, she had grown to glorious intellectual power by absorbing all available knowledge from all sources. But she grew too deeply conscious of her pre-eminence and glory and came to think in her pride that she had nothing to learn from the barbarian. "So far behind has our city left all others in thought and language, that her pupils are the teachers of the world,

[1] Iskandar — Alexander

and she has made the name of Greek seem no longer a badge of blood but of mind, and men are called Greeks more because they have part in our culture than because they come of a common stock."

She succumbed to the very power which she despised The early giants had attempted the sublime task of casting off all assumption and convention, of founding the mind of man upon no other foundation than rational thought That quixotic attempt in an age hardly emerged from barbaric nescience, was not in vain, but it was, of course, hopeless in its audacity They had no basis, no facts, no systematized experience whereon to build And their successors in the pride of pure reason came more and more to reject and despise mere observation and inquiry, to cast aside the germs of the scientific spirit upon whose foundations, scanty as they were, the early thinkers had built All the forces of mysticism, will-to-believe, and fine sentiments, were battering at the door like Persian hosts round Thermopylæ Thought lacking the armoury of exact data, was incapable of offering resistance to the oriental hordes of nebulous visions and opium dreams which steadily crept over the ground reclaimed by rational thought Plato shines with a splendour which is already in large measure phosphoric From Platonism to Neo-Platonism is but a step As Greece had transmuted the barbaric tinsels of the Orient into rich gold, so the East once more seized upon the jewels of Greece and wove them into mystic, cabalistic webs, into its gnosticisms and theologies

CHAPTER III

PAX ROMANA

SUPERFICIALLY the origin of Rome somewhat resembles that of Greece—small tribes (*gentes*) in whom a jealous spirit of independence is inveterate Here the *patres familias*, not the tribal war-chiefs, are the natural rulers wielding stern familial authority, and will become the *patres conscripti* and the ruling patrician aristocracy As in Greece, phases of 'kingship' were swept away by the insubordinate forces of tribal democracy As in Greece, violent struggles and conflicts took place between patrician and plebeian, and here again the forces of self-defence proved too powerful to allow of any complete triumph on the part of encroaching privilege As Athens had its Solonian and Kleisthenean revolutions, so Rome had its Secessions to the Sacred Hill, and its Licinian laws

But under that superficial similarity lay differences which could scarcely be more profound While the Greek of poverty-stricken Hellas was perforce a sea-rover, a pirate, an adventurer, tasting of all the rich fruits of the eastern world, the Romans were a tribe of stay-at-home farmers, with all the peasant's limitation of outlook, conservatism, stolid abstemiousness, plodding stubbornness, his close-fistedness and keen eye for the main chance The necessity of defending their crops and of settling boundary disputes with neighbouring tribes, made it a routine of their lives to be periodically called out on *commando* But they were not temperamentally bellicose nor particularly liked war for its own sake. They waged it with cool business-like method and calculation, and early learnt to attain their ends by negotiation, alliances and hard-driven bargains They intensely distrusted and disliked adventure

It was a freakish paradox of fate which thrust upon those cautious, unimaginative Italian Boers the part of world-conquerors When first drawn into wide foreign embroilments after the first Punic War, they proclaimed a policy of no annexations (and large indemnities) Scipio expressed the general and deep traditional feeling when he advocated a Monroe doctrine deprecating all expansion beyond the Tuscan Apennine and the peninsula, and we find the same caution recurring even so late as the political testament of Augustus, and in Hadrian's renouncement of the conquests of Trajan. Only when their peasants' eyes were set agape at the sight of the undreamed-of wealth brought from Pontus and Syria by Lucullus and Pompey, did they lose their heads and become infected with the get-rich-quick fever

What drove them to go empire-building was not any romantic ambition or love of glory, or vanity, such as might actuate an oriental despot, or any hollow ideal of empire and passion for ruling, but purely and simply the desire to make money, to make money quickly The conquests, as they soon saw, offered plenty of opportunities, the farming of taxes, army contracts, the financing of political aspirants, money-lending at exorbitant rates, and, richest prize of all, the government of a province, when the raising of the tribute was left to the proconsul, and no questions asked Those were the chief ways of making large fortunes, there were no great industrial enterprises then, no railways or oil-wells, no great commercial organizations. The money had to be invested and, as there were no industrial and commercial shares, or gilt-edged securities, the only possible form of permanent investment was land They invested their money in land The original small farmer being more and more frequently absent on active service, his farm, left to the care of some elderly relatives and a few slaves, went to rack and ruin He was easily mortgaged or bought out Italy was thus soon divided into vast estates which were productively and economically worked by means of slave-labour which the wars supplied in abundance After Italy the foreign provinces soon followed. In the famous impeachment

of Verres, Cicero brought out the fact that in one district of Sicily there were, when Verres went there as proprætor, 773 landed proprietors, and three years later only 318 Half the province of Africa was at the time of the early Cæsars owned by six landlords.

There is no harm in making money and investing it But what was to become of the dispossessed farmer? There were no factories or other employment for him to go to, he had perforce to go back to the army or to lounge in Rome at the expense of the state He had nothing left "Your generals," said Tiberius Gracchus, "urge their men in battle, telling them to fight for their hearths and homes and the graves of their dear ones They lie, not one of all those Romans possesses a hearth or a home, or even a family grave That others may enjoy riches and pleasures, that is what they are fighting and dying for, those Romans who are called 'masters of the world,' while they have not so much as a sod of earth that they can call their own" The wars of Lucullus, of Pompey, of Cæsar had brought in hundreds of thousands of slaves who worked on the large estates But thereafter the supply abruptly dwindled. Slaves did not breed, they had no families, there were few women Instead of being cheap, they became expensive, the labour supply failed The freemen had to be employed, they were employed as *coloni*; they became bound more and more to the soil, at first they paid rent, then a proportion of the produce, besides sundry customary 'gifts,' or *xenia*, then had to contribute a certain amount of labour to the working of the villa, to supply transport, etc, and finally, under Diocletian, they were completely bound to the soil, forbidden to move They too became slaves, predial serfs in all but in name And they too dwindled The whole population decreased until it became an ever more serious problem how to keep up the strength of the armies, even for purely defensive purposes. In the early empire those vast frontiers, far more extensive than our battle-line on all fronts in the late war, were defended by garrisons amounting to the absurd number of about 300,000 men

Greek culture, which they at first fiercely resisted, did not sufficiently transform the enriched peasants to enable them to continue it, or use it as the starting-point of original development. The influx of civilization tended with them in general to coarseness, to the vulgarity and megalomania of the *nouveau riche*. In the pictorial arts they remained sterile, save for the production of the realistic portrait-bust—the idealizing Greek never carved a real portrait. In architecture, while carrying to high development the engineering aspect of construction, as in the arch and the dome, they perpetrated—and unfortunately perpetuated—as regards the purely artistic and decorative aspect, the most appalling horrors of bad taste, such as the pilaster and the use of mixed orders. Greek drama bored them, they preferred mimes, buffoons and acrobats.

To the end a stodgy pedestrianism remained the mark of their mentality. The sacred fire, the divine folly was never theirs. The very brief and evanescent *grand siecle* of their literature did not contribute a single creator to the Olympus of world inspirers, scarcely a work of genuine original inspiration—Lucretius, the exponent of Epicurus, and Catullus, the lover of Claudia Metella, are the nearest approach to exceptions. The first brief outgush of imitative production was followed by an almost unbroken sterility. Roman intellect tended forthwith to settle into a rut of cultural traditionalism; it lived under the oppressive weight of 'the great models,' who had set the standard of attainable excellence. The goal of literature was to approximate as closely as possible to the form and language of those consecrated great ones who had fixed the ideal for all time. In what is called the 'silver age,' the rococo Renaissance of Quintillian and Pliny, literary art consisted in imitating Cicero, whose language was as 'dead' then as during the Italian Renaissance. Other writers, like Fronto and Apuleius, harked back to still older archaisms. "*Multi ex alieno sæculo petunt verba. duodecim tabulas loquuntur*" (Seneca, *Ep.* 114, 13). In the last stages of the empire the surviving cultural elements exhibit exactly the same spirit and attitude

which centuries later we find in the grammarian-humanist, the antiquity-worshipper of the Renaissance Like him they lived upon the past Symmachus, Ausonius, and their contemporary belles-lettrists might be transferred without a single mental change from the fourth to the fifteenth century ; the ideal of refined culture was exactly the same in the two periods, the same which still lingers on to our own day in the academic tradition of classical scholarship—to indite correctly Ciceronian periods, to compose a sweet thing in the way of well-turned Virgilian hexameters, or Horatian verses clothed in frowzy mythological language, to elaborate the obvious in elegant conversation on 'polite literature,' to take a childish delight in parading one's familiarity with *the* authors by a plentiful besprinkling of quotations, to rehearse with beatific mental vacuity the consecrated phrases, to 'look down from the heights of scholarship upon the common herd' Literature, thought, life itself, became a kind of ritual, a round of prescribed formulas and duties, serenely detached from the throbbing actualities of the world, a breviary of 'correct things' to be said, thought, and done correctly

But side by side with the fossilization of an imitative intellectual culture, there went on a process of genuine growth, one which, apart from the political legacy of Rome, and not altogether distinct even from that, constitutes her most momentous contribution to the world, and the most fundamental and distinctive feature of her mental development That continuous process whose course runs unbroken from the first naturalization of culture down to the final submersion of its last lingering remnants, is one of moral development In Greece with the first onset of symptoms of weariness in the metaphysical effort, philosophical thought had shown a tendency to concentrate upon the purely human problems of life and conduct But it was chiefly in Rome that the tendency developed and matured That ethical aspect was the only one which appealed to

the Romans; of metaphysics they took no account. A love of solemn moralizing, a Polonius-like sententiousness was always a trait of their peasant psychology. The creed of Stoicism, so congenial in its affinity to the old austere Latin spirit, became their lay religion, the dominant vein of Roman thought. Its identification with the chief intellectual occupation of the cultivated classes, the sphere of law, the development of jurisprudence, led to the greatest and most permanent concrete achievement of Rome. All Roman thinkers were lawyers; the ultimate goal and practical application of their education, their literary, their rhetorical, their philosophic training, was the law-courts. This was a natural consequence of the administrative tasks and problems thrust upon them by the expanding empire. It was the great discovery of their cautious, matter-of-fact minds—"*omnium virtutum et utilitatum rapacissimi*"[1]—that the only really effective way to manage and rule men is by a certain amount of fairness and justice, that honesty is an asset in business, even if that business be the most atrociously immoral exploitation. They had long recognized that the principle of freedom and justice to conquered populations was the most practically efficient, as well as fiscally the most profitable. In those circumstances the old code of the Twelve Tables required constant adaptation and supplementing by means of case law; heterogeneous populations had to be dealt with under the principles of the *jus gentium*, that is, legal norms common to all nations; and this in time gave rise and place to the conception of a *jus naturale*, natural principles of equity, a notion which, although vaguely supposed to refer to some ideal 'state of nature,' simply amounted to this, that all privilege and social distinctions, all arbitrary traditional usages, must be regarded as artificial conventions, and that justice rests therefore upon the necessary postulate of unsophisticated equality. Fifteen centuries before Rousseau and the *Droits de l'homme*, Ulpian laid down the principle that "All men are born free and equal." From that great and

[1] Plin. *Hist. Nat.* 25, 2, 4.

noble growth of Roman law which went on broadening out continuously in its spirit of humanity and justice almost down to the last breath of Roman power, abolishing the fierce patriarchal tradition of parental tyranny, protecting the widow and the orphan, extenuating slavery almost to the verge of abolition—from that highest achievement of the Roman mind, philosophic thought, the rational theory of life, was from the first recognized to be inseparable The philosophers of Rome were her lawyers and legislators, the juridic and philosophic thought were one

The growth of Roman law was, indeed, but an expression of an ethical evolution, of the development of a particular ethical ideal, which went on throughout the career of the Roman mind, and which—though I shall not stop just now to judge of its absolute validity—represented, and is still commonly held to represent, the supreme standard of moral excellence Of that stream of ethical development the literature of Tacitean diatribes and homiletical tracts on ideal Germans and Agricolas, the fierce denunciations of satirists, which furnish the materials for the dear old conventional myth of 'growing moral corruption,' are manifestations So in a more direct way is the long series of moral and devotional manuals, and 'consolations,' from Cicero to Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and Plutarch A whole set of informal institutions attended the establishment of that lay religion of morality The moral sermon became part of the regular routine of life, and large congregations crowded under the pulpits of the fashionable preachers. From the days of Paulus Æmilius it became customary in the homes of the aristocracy to keep a household chaplain, or philosopher, the exhortations and consolations of the most reputed spiritual directors were eagerly sought after at all times of affliction and distress, and auricular confession was constantly enjoined and practised Nor was the movement confined to the cultured and aristocratic The capital and the countryside swarmed with itinerant preachers, and the populace were exhorted in their own rough speech to the higher life by the mendicant brothers

whose rules and tenets have been described to us by Epictetus. They were vowed to poverty and celibacy, they were fathers to all, men being their spiritual sons and women their daughters in God, they preached as messengers from God the gospel of renunciation and repentance, they were to suffer calmly scoffs, insults and blows, and to love them that did them wrong and persecuted them

In the closing centuries of the Western Empire the moralizing spirit tended, like the literary, to settle into an established vein of consecrated sentiment, growing somewhat frowzy and conventional The typical Roman gentleman of the decadence, especially in the provinces—the life of all large and wealthy cities is always 'immoral'—was a confirmed puritan, the model of staid bourgeois virtues, and as morally correct in his sentiments as in his literary tastes He and his women-folk were quite early-Victorian in their stodgy beseemingness, strait-laced propriety, and serious earnestness on the subject of moral platitudes He subscribed to charities, and read family prayers to the servants If he did not adopt Christianity, it was because his settled toryism was somewhat shy of new-fangled labels, he was not quite sure that the chapel people were quite 'the thing,' and he disapproved of the undignified excesses of his friends who took to monasticism and hair-shirts But in moral sentiment he was quintessentially Christian, or rather his Christian neighbour's moral sentiments were nought else than his own pagan righteousness associated with extraneous mystic and dogmatic elements

The intellectual culture of the ancient world, even at its best, suffered from a fundamental disability and weakness It lacked a solid anchor-hold in concrete knowledge It was pre-scientific

The power of rational thought depends upon two elements, its method and its data Without adequate

data, without experience, consistency and rationality are of small avail The patient investigation of details, toilsome inquiry and research, the slow accumulation of facts, on the one hand, and the broad judgments of generalizing thought, on the other, are unfortunately the attributes of two different types of mind The specialist who dwells in a little world of little details grows to be satisfied and to take pleasure in those minutiæ, one little fact exactly ascertained is the prize towards which his mental activities tend, it suffices him, he is not drawn towards broad and new horizons, he is not at home in the thinner atmosphere of generalizations The thinker, on the other hand, chafes at trifles and details, he who is accustomed to fly on the pinions of thought, cannot suffer to be confined and crawl among the dust of isolated facts To number the hairs on the appendages of a new species of shrimp, is a task belonging to an order of mind distinct from that which is drawn towards the great problems of life and of the universe, an inferior, if you will, humdrum, myopic, round-shouldered, order of mind Only when the multiplicity of facts and details becomes illuminated by a generalizing theory, when each small fact and each small detail is transformed into a witness to a great and universal significance, do they acquire value and interest to the higher type of intellect

In the exultant confidence of its dialectic freedom and suppleness, the Greek mind never developed any consciousness of the sacredness of observed fact It was abstract Accuracy of thought meant for it accuracy in the operation of discursive reason, logic, but it never formed any conception of accuracy in the basis of the reasoning process, in the materials and data of thought, in ascertained experience It was ready to disport itself in the dialectical game on any given theme, on any given premises, but so long as those premises were logically defined it did not trouble very much as to their intrinsic validity It had curiosity, but not the thirst for hoarding up the coins of knowledge, not the preoccupation for submitting their value to crucial test The whole intellect of the Greeks was

concentrated upon the intellectual process itself, to the almost entire neglect of the materials upon which that process operates. It navigated adventurously the seas of speculation, but with neither compass nor loadstar; it set out in search of strange lands, but without any means of taking its bearings.

In the whole of classical literature we cannot find above two doubtful mentions of anything like a scientific experiment, that of Pythagoras on the vibration of a cord, and that of Ptolemy on refraction In his encyclopedia on the natural knowledge of his day, Pliny, among a host of grotesque hearsays, does not once use the word 'experiment' in our sense In the most methodical thinkers of Greece, in Aristotle for instance, we meet with the most astounding carelessness in matters of easiest verification He states, for instance, that there is only one bone in a lion's neck, that man has eight ribs, that men have more teeth than women, that men only have a beating heart, that female skulls, unlike those of males, have a circular suture, that eggs float on sea-water, that if sea-water be collected in a wax vessel it becomes drinkable. The Greeks, in short, had no science, and no scientific spirit. It is science and the scientific spirit which constitutes the distinction between the ancient and the modern world

It was, indeed, on the foundation of the few facts and methods gathered by Chaldæan and Egyptian science that Greek thought first arose, and the early Ionian thinkers came nearer to the scientific spirit than almost any Greek in subsequent times But even with them the chief interest lay with the final synthesis, the generalization, and, with brilliant divination, they used that faculty of inspired guess-work which is one of the most valuable instruments of science and its crowning triumph, but which has little place in its beginnings Thereafter, the only form of science which was at all cultivated by the Greeks was mathematics, which is a form of logic, and in which they were interested as logic and 'music,' not as an instrument of research. Plato would have none but 'mathema-

ticians' among his pupils, but the meaning he attached to the word may be gauged from his attitude towards Archytas and Menæchmus who had devised some sliding-rules and compasses as aids to mathematical study "Plato," says Plutarch, "inveighed against them with great indignation and persistence as destroying and perverting all the good there is in geometry; for the method absconds from incorporeal and intellectual to sensible things, and besides employs again such bodies as require much vulgar handicraft in this way mechanics was dissimilated and expelled from geometry, and, being for a long time looked down upon by philosophy, became one of the arts of war" The man whom, by the influence which his surviving works have exercised, we are accustomed to regard as the most scientific genius of the ancient world, Archimedes, was of exactly the same opinion as Plato, and it was only under loud protest that he consented to degrade mathematics by putting his knowledge to practical application The Greeks not only ignored the actual groundwork of science, experimental research, observation, they persistently decried, depreciated it, and despised it Aristophanes ridiculed astronomy and geometry The Athenian Nicias at Syracuse was, when there was an eclipse of the moon, as helplessly a prey to the soothsayers as the merest savage, although Thales and Anaxagoras were acquainted with the Babylonian method of predicting eclipses

Socrates "brought down philosophy from heaven to earth," as the fact was usually expressed 'Why,' asked he—how constantly do we hear around us the argument!—'Why spend our time and thought in studying the heavens, in measuring the distances of the stars, in fretting about the constitution of matter, of the universe, in studying birds and beasts and trees? The thing which it is of importance to us to study is life, this human life wherein our business lies, not the distant stars, but the human world we live in, not animals and insects and plants, but men Before seeking to know about the stars, and shells, and trees, it behoves us to seek to know something which lies much closer at

hand—ourselves The proper study of mankind is man' How wise and sensible that all sounds! And how that straightforward common sense has always captured the approval of the plain man And yet it is an utter and pernicious fallacy It is through that star-gazing that man has first been placed in a position to measure at all his own stature, the proportion and significance of his life in the universe That 'natural history,' as it used to be called, that harmless, somewhat childish hobby of collecting moths, of studying birds and trees, of botanizing and bird-nesting, that somewhat absurd, trifling pastime has, lo and behold! developed into a science of biology, and the whole conception, the whole significance of man, of his life, of his being, of his world has been utterly transfigured Man went about for centuries with Γνῶθι σαυτόν on his signet-ring, studying himself, studying humanity, pleasantly talking and talking round and round in old circles, to no purpose *And, behold, the only real knowledge,* the only illumination, the only revelation which has come about himself, has come from that unpractical star-gazing and studying of beasts and plants He thought to begin at the beginning by attending to what lay closest at hand, his own self, and he was in reality in vain and futile effort trying to begin at the top He could not rightly understand himself at all without first trying to understand the world he lived in Through that remote, irrelevant inquiry lay in fact the main road to self-knowledge

As all their scientific notions had by the roaming Ionians been derived from Egypt and Chaldæa, so the only organized scientific movement in the whole of classical antiquity, that of the Ptolemaic University of Alexandria, took place on the foundations, under the influence, on the very soil of Egypt. With only one or two notable exceptions Alexandrian science occupied itself with systematization and compilation rather than with original discovery and development of method. The first occupant of the chair of mathematics, Euclid, did little more than order and gather together the

scattered geometrical theorems of his Ionian predecessors, Hippocrates of Chios in particular and Eudoxos of Cnidos, the friend of the priests of Heliopolis, whose mantle the Apis bull had licked. The only mechanical device which we actually know to have been used by Archimedes, the pupil of Euclid's successor, Conon, the Archimedean screw, had been in use on the Nile before Greece existed. The greatest systematizer of astronomical knowledge was Hipparchos, whose work we only know through the clumsy compilation of Claudius Ptolemæus, a work full of astrological fancies, which perpetuated for centuries the unwieldy methods and doctrines of epicycles. Aristarchos of Samos, who first suggested the simplification of all astronomy on the theory of a central sun and moving earth, could not get a hearing.

It is a notable and striking fact that Greece and Rome, who so completely transformed the world and opened up a new universe of civilization, did not produce a single practical invention or industrial discovery of any importance. Almost all the crafts and industries of the ancient world, textile fabrics, dyes, papyrus, glass, glazed porcelain, were oriental discoveries and remained essentially oriental products. From the early days of Babylon and Egypt there is no new material discovery of importance to record until the introduction of paper, gunpowder, and the mariner's compass into Europe by the Arabs. The genius which could create a new world of intellect, differing from that of the Orient as noonday from midnight, appeared incapable of extending in any way the material powers and resources of life. So far as material processes are concerned, the Romans excelled the Greeks; they did excel in engineering and the building arts, in road-making, drainage, mining. the Greeks never got so far as making a road or building an aqueduct. The practical and realistic Roman mind was really more disposed towards observation and research than the Greek, but it was entirely governed by the influence of Greek tradition, and when Cæsar wished to reform the calendar, mathematicians and astronomers had to

be fetched from Egypt The Græco-Roman civilization remained pre-scientific

Failing that necessary ingredient no real progress in the powers of the human intellect beyond a set limit was possible. A dozen successive Athens could not have carried it any farther It could wander this way and that way, circle round to its starting-point, but it could never establish its advance by any permanent occupation of the conquered territory And it remained, in spite of all the splendid rationalism of Greece and Rome, essentially destitute of any solid protection or security against the impinging currents and tides of irrationalism Modern experience has shown time and again the insecurity and powerlessness of the most brilliant abstract intellectual achievement, until it is grounded in the solid basis of demonstration and unshakable evidence It has become a commonplace of science that the true discoverer is not the man who formulates but he who substantiates, not the brilliant thinker who first glimpses the vision of truth, but the humdrum plodder who accumulates such a foundation of facts that all the world cannot shake it

Besides that fundamental limitation ancient culture was inadequately diffused Although it had no esoteric spirit —the ruling class did not owe their power to tradition, but to wealth—although its circulation was free, the circle of men in the Roman Empire who were at all abreast of the mental resources of the age, was in reality extremely restricted Even among the wealthy a large proportion were new and vulgar rich, idlers, *ingenui*, self-made men, who cared for none of these things There was no organized provision for general education, and no agency, like the printing-press, to make up for the deficiency In a tiny, compact community like Athens, every citizen came more or less under the influence of existing culture In the teeming, heterogeneous, shifting population of a vast empire, the case was very different. Those swarming masses of humanity were not mere herds of crushed oriental slaves, with child-like mind patiently slumbering in a twilight of

with its infinitely greater opportunities, restless barbarians outwardly clothed in a thin veneer of cultural contacts, just sufficient to conceal their own ignorance and barbarism from themselves Their undisciplined mentality weltered in a flood of superstitions and mysticisms, the usual disease of minds stimulated by the external influences of civilization, yet entirely unequipped and defenceless

Life was complex, accelerated, restless, full of sudden changes, full of sorrows, of struggles, of desires stimulated and thwarted, of disappointments and disillusions To that troubled humanity the religions of the dreaming East, offering their substitutes for thought, came as a light and a revelation, supplying exactly that for which they yearned The Orient came to their rescue as a saviour.

Rome had fought for her existence in a death struggle with the East, and, like Greece, had finally subdued it But the Orient had its revenge , and it was far more glaring and complete than in the case of Greece The same year which was signalized by the definite triumph of Rome over Hannibal, saw the advanced guard of eastern theocracy established within the walls of Rome, called there by the senate itself in compliance with some oracle which associated the step with certain vague promises of world empire As the triumphal procession of Scipio, the most magnificent hitherto witnessed, with its caparisoned elephants and quaint figures of Semitic captives, wound its way to the Capitol amid the acclamations of a people who were henceforth marked as the masters of the world, the strange monotonous strains of an exotic psalmody might have been heard from a chapel on the Palatine, on the site of the old, humble Roma Quadrata. The oriental priests who were chanting those psalms were also members of an army which, like that of Rome, was to march from that spot to the conquest of the world

from Chaldæa, wonder-workers from Egypt, Hebrew cabalists, Persian magicians, Syrian sorcerers, Indian fakirs, the Orient poured legion after legion of grave, stealthy, tonsured and mitred priests, sent religion after religion to take possession of the world-city

To the philosophic moralists of Rome, who eschewed metaphysics, their ethical convictions, aspirations and endeavours needed no external dogmatic or emotional support, sought no other religion than 'the divinity within their own breast' The kingdom of God was within them They looked with disgust and abhorrence on those barbaric and effeminate superstitions, and strove long to put them down and exclude them But the minds of the ignorant and troubled masses, and above all the women, found exactly what they thirsted for in the mystery of those eastern cults A marvellous peace fell upon them in the extra-mundane atmosphere of the dim sanctuaries, sounding with solemn music, now wafted as from a distant sphere, now weeping with the tenderness of human sorrow, presently bursting forth into transfigured ecstasis of triumphant hope The grave rituals, the chanted hymns and litanies, the solemn intonation of the Mithraic clergy as they called upon the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," soothed their troubled passions as with a delightful balm, and they were thrilled with a strange excitement as the tinkling bell of the acolytes announced the culminating mystery of the service, and amid clouds of incense, the officiating priest turned to the kneeling crowd and raised breast-high the sacred chalice filled with the wine of life They were born again to a new life as the cleansing baptismal waters washed away the stains of misery and sin, and what emotion overwhelmed them when, after a stern preparation of fast and penance, they were admitted to partake of the sacramental communion, of the consecrated bread which was the very body of the God! The women found ineffable comfort in unburdening their sorrows before the Queen of Heaven who bore in her arms her Divine Son, and who seemed to mingle her tears with theirs as she mourned over the Dead God The thought of death itself lost its sting for the

votaries who received the assurance of eternal life from the Saviour and Mediator who had triumphed over the grave

East and West have not only met again and again, they have indissolubly commingled In the Hellenistic Orient of the Macedonian Empire the dawn-myths and hieratic rituals of the East and the dialectics and metaphysics of Greece had come together, and brought forth strange hybrid chimeras, new religions innumerable, countless illuminated and ascetic sects, Essenic and Ebionitic, Nazarene and Therapeutrid, swarmed from the ancient brewing-vat And in Antioch and Alexandria all the mysticism, occultism, trismegistal philosophumena, and abracadabras of Jewry, magic Egypt, and Orphic pseudo-Hellas, held their Sabbath of Unreason Platonism had become Plotinism, philosophy theosophy, metaphysics gnosis The Word had become God

The Isiac and Serapic cults of Rome were no more the religion of ancient Egypt, Mithraism was no more the Mazdæanism of Persia, than Christianity was Judaism Religions interchanged their symbols and rituals, became transformed into a new syncretic uniformity more homogeneous than the primitive seasonal rites whence they had sprung, and the worshipper passed from shrine to shrine as he might from one saint's chapel to the adjoining one

As once the corrupted fragments of Hellenic thought, so likewise the ethical spirit of Rome was absorbed in the popular ferments of mysticism, and blended with the ascetic fervour of the East The guilds and brotherhoods which were attached to each cult fostered the feelings of human fellowship and mutual help Mithraism in particular, owing to its Avestic origin, the simplest and therefore the purest of popular cults, addressed itself to the poor, the lowly, and disinherited, the master knelt beside his slave in the mysteries, and was not infrequently called upon to regard him as his spiritual superior That cult seemed about to absorb and supersede all others, and to become under the imperial patronage of Aurelian the official religion of the Roman world.

That position was, however, ultimately assumed by a cult that became the most luxuriant syncretic product of the Hellenistic East, sheltering within the mystic shadows of its dense vegetation of rich allusiveness, every religious idea and every theosophic thought that the world had ever brought forth It came, like Mithraism, from Antioch, but from the Jewish instead of from the Persian elements of the eastern metropolis, or, as some think, originally from Judæa itself, where the nucleus of its ideals had indeed long developed in the monastic communities of the Essenes and Nazarenes Hence, as formerly the Jews had violently repudiated their spiritual debts to Babylon and Persia, it insisted on its exclusiveness, refused to recognize in any way, and even denounced its creditors While, in an even higher degree than other cults, it gave voice and emphasis to the reigning ethical spirit, and was like them an *agape*, a religion of love it was unfortunately distinguished from them by the darkling taint, the old *delirium hebraicum*, of uncompromising intolerance Professor Falta de Gracia goes certainly too far when he says that it was "the religion of hate", but it gave expression to the seething discontent of human suffering, to the detestation of the intolerable order of the established world, to all the inarticulate forces of hostility against the Roman government, and it was that *odium generis humani* which gave it an immeasurable significance and advantage over all competitors

The fall of the Roman Empire has ever been the grand theme of historical philosophizing The event is generally held to be accounted for by uttering the word 'corruption' So far as political corruption goes, Roman administration was as corrupt in the days of Marius, when a petty African chief, Jugurtha, bought with gold every envoy and every general that was sent to put him down, as at any subsequent time, not excepting the fourth and fifth centuries And as for moral corruption, since the primitive, dour austerity disappeared in large measure after the second Punic

War, the society of the Roman Empire was marked, as we have just noted, by a continuous development in austere morality. The gross, obvious reason why the Roman Empire fell is not, as usually stated, that it was too big, but that it was too small. It fell because there were too many barbarians outside it. Had there been no German hordes wanting 'a place in the sun,' the Roman Empire, in spite of its many deficiencies and inefficiencies, might have continued indefinitely—which would have been a great calamity. Of course if it had remained a huge military organization, stiff with swords and military discipline, instead of being a very liberal conglomeration of free and self-ruling municipia, it might have held off the barbarians, and its survival would have been a still greater calamity.

The intrinsic cause that doomed and condemned the Roman Empire was not any *growing* corruption, but the corruption, the evil, the inadaptation to fact, in its very origin and being. No system of human organization that is false in its very principle, in its very foundation, can save itself by any amount of cleverness and efficiency in the means by which that falsehood is carried out and maintained, by any amount of superficial adjustment and tinkering. It is doomed root and branch as long as the root remains what it is. The Roman Empire was, as we have seen, a device for the enrichment of a small class of people by the exploitation of mankind. That business enterprise was carried out with all the honesty, all the fairness and justice compatible with its very nature, and with admirable judgment and ability. But all those virtues could not save the fundamental falsehood, the fundamental wrong from its consequences. Their effects worked inexorably. The supply of slaves failed, the supply of soldiers failed, the supply of labour failed. And—essential fact—the exploited populations came to feel more and more as time went on that the carrying on, the maintenance of the whole thing *was no business of theirs*. They came to see, or be vaguely conscious, that they were not in the least concerned with that social machine which was run not for them, but for the benefit of a small master

class. In vain official voices were raised to appeal to their 'patriotism,' to their duty of helping, and defending, and saving 'the State.' Those appeals left them perfectly cold and indifferent, they answered bluntly that they felt no patriotism whatever, that the 'cold monster,' the State might look after itself. They became Christians They made up their own little organizations for mutual help and protection, and resistance against 'the State' They utterly disowned it and denounced it, they refused to serve it, it might go to perdition for all they cared, it was no country, no 'patria' of theirs, their kingdom was not of this world. In Gaul in the third century the peasants, the *coloni*, broke out into open revolt, into anarchy and plunder, just as they did later at the time of the *Jacqueries* and of the French Revolution Though partially put down for a time by Maximian, the *Bagaudæ* insurrection continued till the end

When things got most desperate the Roman government had the good fortune to find a strong man of extraordinary ability and energy, Diocletian He set to consolidating everything in the most vigorous manner, raised the army to four times its strength and reorganized it, strengthened the entire network of administration and central government and made the latter absolute His aim was to stay all further disintegration by rigidly pinning things down with iron bonds in their existing state When a social structure visibly threatens to topple over, rulers try to prevent it from falling by preventing it from moving The whole of Roman society was fixed in a system of castes, no one was to change his avocation, the son must continue in the calling of his father Sedition, discontent, disloyalty, were dealt with with a strong hand Though partial to many Christian religious ideas and counting many personal friends in the sect, he even decided to put down Christianity His successor, Constantine, tried the opposite policy, that of conciliation and concessions, had the ingenious idea to avail himself of the admirable network of Christian organization, Christian trade-unions, to assist and strengthen the government

But evils secularly developed and lying at the very root of a social order are not to be remedied at a stroke by either vigorous or ingenious political measures. Whether vigorously put down or conciliated, the masses of exploited population and the municipia remained indifferent and hostile When the barbarian flood broke through, they not only did not resist, but welcomed them, and joined with them "The powerful decide what the poor have to pay The poor thirst for freedom and have to endure extreme servitude," writes Salvianus in the fifth century, "I wonder only that all the poor and needy do not run away, except that they are loath to abandon their land and families Should we Romans marvel that we cannot resist the Goths, when Roman citizens had rather live with them than with us? The Romans in the Gothic kingdom are so attached to the Roman government that they prefer to remain poor under the Goths, to being well-off among the Romans and bear the heavy burdens of taxation" With unfailing instinct, the clergy saw in the wild Barbarians a better promise of power and influence for the Church than in the officially converted Roman Empire which, in spite of Constantine and Theodosius, remained 'the Beast,' the enemy They accordingly smiled on the invader, encouraged him, flattered him The Roman clergy were undisguisedly pro-German They resolutely winked at, and minimized any 'atrocities' Had there been a massacre? Well, men had to die sooner or later And when Alaric put Rome to the sack, looting, burning, and ravishing, St Augustine employed himself in composing a dissertation on the question whether or not the outraged virgins would be entitled to the crown of maidenhood in the next world

CHAPTER IV

BARBARISM AND BYZANTINISM

We have so far seen three broadly distinguished stages mark the course of human evolution First the long, primitive tribal stage in which custom-thought ruled absolute, broken only now and again, and only to be renewed with but slightly weakened force, by material discoveries and the clash of cultures To that original phase succeeded that of the great oriental civilizations wholly dominated by theocratic power-thought whose absolutism is only occasionally and ineffectually challenged by military power, and which, owing to its greater subtlety of direction and elasticity of interpretation, virtually nullifies the disruptive effects of cross-fertilization. Thirdly comes the extraordinarily felicitous accident of Greece, which at a blow almost completely liberates the human mind from custom- and power-thought, and raises it to undreamed-of heights of power and unfettered efficiency But while it utilizes all the available data of rational thought, it contributes little to their increase, and its poverty in that respect cripples the power which it derives from freedom. The world contains as yet too much barbarism and too much orientalism, and the Græco-Roman phase of civilization succumbs at last to a gigantic tide of those elements which submerge and overwhelm it. It is eventually succeeded by a fourth phase, the one in which we live.

That phase is sharply separated from the foregoing one by the tremendous cataclysm out of which it arose It is largely owing to that circumstance that the process of human progress, when estimated by the narrow parallax of our ordinary historic purview, is not obviously and indisputably recognizable That short space of time is

divided in its very middle by the cataclysm which swept away all previous achievements. Hence the whole curve is broken and disguised. Under totally new conditions, with new materials, a new development took place Throughout the greater part of it a glaring contrast was presented between the painful struggles towards reconstruction of a world steeped in barbarism, and overwhelmed by a thousand rude and tyrannous elements, and the lucid splendour of that civilization which lay in the dust. Men looked to the past for help, example, inspiration, they quite rightly and justly regarded themselves as the pupils of 'the ancients,' and quite justly looked upon these as their superiors.

Yet eventually all foregoing phases of civilization have been wholly transcended, and the powers and potentialities of the human race magnified beyond estimation, by the civilization which has arisen out of that melting-pot of utter ruin and destruction into which every form and every deformity of human power had been cast It is quite impossible to estimate rightly and judge at all adequately the forces whose struggles and interaction we see before us, unless our modern civilization is viewed in its true place in the perspective of history, unless we know in their origin and development the character of those forces, which have been brought together in the phase of civilization which at the present day is struggling through the crisis of its development But, although to the modern European the genesis of the civilization in which he lives may, of all phases of historical evolution be deemed foremost in importance, so thoroughly have traditional misconceptions and persistent misrepresentation falsified his notions on that point, that they are only a few degrees removed from the dim and fabulous conceptions which the Greeks and the Romans entertained concerning their own origins.

Although the Græco-Roman world did not sink under a catastrophic blow such as wiped out Babylon or Susa, Asshûr or Ecbatana, and wreathed the sand-drifts of the desert over their graves, although its

downfall was a process of transitional, though rapid, disintegration rather than a sudden and violent cataclysm; although the contemporaries of Alaric and of Romulus Augustulus were scarcely aware of what was happening, that a world was dropping into chaos—yet no civilization ever suffered more complete obliteration. It is the most appalling catastrophe in history Human civilization, seemingly powerful and securely established, embracing the known world in one large organized, peaceful, prosperous society was completely blotted out. All that humanity had achieved seemed to be swept away and set at nought Athens and Rome had raised mankind to a new plane, they had set it higher above the old civilizations of the East than the troglodyte of prehistory was above the ape they had created a truly human world, mature and conscious And now of all that growth, of all that glorious evolution, practically nothing was left The hands of the clock had sprung back to darkness and savagery

The depth of that ruin is not generally realized in its full horror The records of the period are eked out with the names of barbarian chiefs and their wars, and do not dwell on the picture of the existing world By an optical illusion the light that shines before and after tends to diffuse over the dark gap From the fifth to the tenth century Europe lay sunk in a night of barbarism which grew darker and darker It was a barbarism far more awful and horrible than that of the primitive savage, for it was the decomposing body of what had been a great civilization The features and impress of that civilization were all but completely effaced. Where its development had been fullest, in Italy and in Gaul, all was ruin, squalor, desolation. The land had dropped out of cultivation, trees and shrubs rapidly encroached upon the once cultivated land, rivers overflowed their broken and neglected banks, the forest and the malarial swamp regained their sway over vast tracts of country which had been covered with prosperous farms and waving fields The word *eremus*, wilderness, recurs with significant frequency in mediæval land charts Cities had practically disappeared. Where there is no

trade there can be no cities. They were pulled down and used as quarries, and only the central part walled in when a bishop or a baron established himself there who could afford some protection In Nîmes, for instance, the remains of the population dwelled in huts built among the ruins of the amphitheatre Others were completely abandoned Mantua was submerged by stagnant waters and deserted. The Germans who regarded walled cities as a badge of servitude, hastened to pull them down Of all the prosperous cities built by the Romans on the banks of the Rhine not one remained in the ninth century The ruins and the scattered settlements were visited by herds of prowling wolves, boars, and even by bears The atria of the Roman villas, when not converted into cloisters, were filled in with hovels and dunghills, the surrounding living-rooms serving as quarries and ramparts. Clad in the skins of beasts and in coarse, sack-shaped woollen garments, the enormously reduced population lived in thatched wooden huts, huddled for protection at the foot of the barons' lairs, or round monasteries Every such little group manufactured its own materials and clothing, and supported its miserable existence by scanty cultivation of small patches of ground round their hovels They did not dare to go further afield for fear of wild beasts and of marauders Famines and plagues were chronic, there were ten devastating famines and thirteen plagues in the course of the tenth century alone Cases of cannibalism were not uncommon, there were man-hunts, not with a view to plunder, but for food, it is on record that at Tournus, on the Saône, human flesh was publicly put up for sale It was impossible to venture abroad without a strong armed escort, robber bands roamed everywhere Water traffic was put a stop to by the practice of wrecking, which was actually encouraged by charters Anarchy was absolute and unchecked, there was no law but the arbitrary will of the barons and their men-at-arms, none had power to check them They lived in their towers in rush-strewn halls, which frequently served also as stables for their horses. They had no other occupation but brigandage, private wars, and riot.

Because out of that abyss of darkness and desolation civilization did ultimately emerge anew, the fact is generally accepted with careless indifference as if it were quite natural and inevitable. It used to be in the popular conception of history held to be sufficiently accounted for by a reference to the 'Renaissance' and the restoration of classical literature after the fall of Constantinople. Obviously a mere begging of the question, for there is little to be explained in the fact that the Europe which had already produced Dante should proceed to bring forth Messer Petrarca and an Italian Renaissance. It has gradually become more clearly recognized that it was in the period between the end of the tenth and that of the twelfth century that Europe emerged out of the night The old misconception and confusion is perpetuated by our current historical rubrics, which include both that period and the Dark Ages under the term 'Middle Ages,' and apply the name of 'Renaissance' to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, whose culture was but the ripe fruit of antecedent growth, a fruit not only ripe, but in many respects rotten. That civilization should have grown at all out of the troglodytic Europe of the ninth century, far from being quite natural, is a very remarkable fact

The various Germanic hordes that trod down the ancient civilization brought with them no qualities that could help to build a new one The panegyrical twaddle that pervades all our histories about "the young, virile Teutonic races regenerating the effete and decrepit Roman world," is a brazen effrontery of racial-historical mendacity of the same order as the bestowing of the benefits of Teutonic 'Kultur' by Prussian Junkerdom

The cultural condition of the primitive tribal state is, as we have already noted, rigorously precluded from advancing beyond a definite limit. Only in exceptionally favourable circumstances, as happened in the case of Greece suckled at the many breasts of oriental cultures, can tribal society become an agency of progress

The barbaric tribes of Europe were, save for possession

of metals, in much the same state as the Maoris when first visited by Captain Cook. They lived in wooden huts in swamps and forest glades. They possessed a few household crafts, very little agriculture, and native poetry, which is always of considerable merit among savages. For the rest they were drunken, murderous, treacherous, licentious brutes Their savagery was of a particularly base and bestial type To libel them is not possible, to sound the full measure of their infamy is revolting Gluttonous, riotous orgies, to shout, heated with strong drink, was their ideal of enjoyment. Slaughter, cruelty, obscene violence, were the natural outlets of their energies In mind they were sluggish and heavy—*gens nec astuta nec callida* (Tac xxii) When not employed with bloodshed, food, and drink, they would sit for days warming themselves at their fires, and making their women work for them

The barbaric courts were, one and all, scenes of perpetual murders, parricides, fratricides, poisonings, perjuries, bestiality, and whoredom "It would not be easy within the same historical space to find more vice and less virtue," is Gibbon's comment, and he was not by any means emancipated from the fable of barbaric virtues There are indeed no more utterly sickening pages in human annals than the tale of unredeemed abominations, the exploits of Clothaire, Chilpéric, Frédégonde, recorded with such inimitable unction by St Gregory of Tours Procopius, the Byzantine historian of the Goths, shows more delicacy, he refuses to soil his pages with the horrors exhibited by those savages, "lest I should transmit to succeeding ages a monument and example of inhumanity."

Clovis obtains the Ripuarian kingdom by inducing the king's son to murder his father, and by afterwards cracking his skull His progress is indeed rather monotonously marked by an habitual breaking of skulls, often by way of argument or facetious repartee, but generally those of rivals decoyed to his court under treacherous safe-conducts. As St Gregory charmingly remarks, "Thus did God every day fell down some one of his enemies by his hand, and extend the confines of

his realm, because he walked with an upright heart before the Lord and did what was acceptable in His eyes." Charlemagne's son Louis the Pious tears out the eyes of his brother Pepin's son, drawn to his court under safe-conduct Louis's son, Lothair, vents his jealousy of his half-brother by seizing the little daughter of his guardian from a convent, fastening her up in a cask and throwing her into the river The Lombard court of the drunken Alboin, assassinated by his wife Rosmunda, whom he had compelled to drink out of her murdered father's skull, and who afterwards married her accomplice, and in turn murdered him, presents the same vile spectacle as the Frankish court In Burgundy the king, Gundebald, consolidated his throne by killing his three brothers Theodoric himself, who represented more creditably than any other barbarian the effect of a Roman education, broke out after a time, as imperfectly tamed wild animals are apt to do, into primal ferocity Each of the Gothic kings who succeeded him murdered his predecessor.

If any of the Teutonic chieftains rose at all above the lowest barbaric level, it was owing to special contact with Græco-Roman civilization · Alaric, Odoacre, Theodoric, had been brought up in the Roman legions

But no barbarians have ever proved themselves more refractory to all civilizing influences than the 'virile Teutons' Instead of absorbing anything of the civilization which they overthrew, they became, with the means and opportunities of indulgence, considerably more brutal than they were before They regarded their conquests as occasions for sottish riot and bestial tyranny When they became Christianized they converted the monasteries into Walhallas of drunken orgy The appalling condition of the Church and monasteries in the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries was not due to the corruption of the Roman clergy so much as to the influx of barbarian priests and monks The convents resounded with riot through the night Capitularies of the Carolingian period enact among other rules that "priests shall not have more than one wife," they lay down detailed regulations concerning incest, they forbid monks to spend their time in taverns, and ordain

that "on no account shall an abbot gouge out the eyes of his monks or mutilate them, whatever fault they may have committed"[1] Legislation testifies to the universal prevalence of female drunkenness, and St Boniface complains that, under pretext of pilgrimages, a trail of Teutonic prostitutes was left over every part of Europe[2] Regarding as they did physical strength and combative qualities as the supreme human virtues, the contempt of the barbarian invaders for the pacific population knew no bounds They ascribed that "ignoble effeminacy" to culture and education, and consequently refused to allow their children to be educated, "for education tends to corrupt, enervate and depress the mind"[3]

The fabric of the Roman Empire had left one great representative Europe owes a perennial debt to the Christian Church, it constituted a bond which united the congery of kingdoms and domains into which the world had been broken up, into the theoretical body of Christendom. Hence the development of our civilization has not been Italian, or French, or German, but European The language of Rome, some relics and traditions of her administrative order and ideas, were part of the uniting bond preserved in the Roman Church

The civilizing influence which the Church thus exercised, was chiefly owing to its position as the representative of Roman civilization, as imposing the tradition, the associations, the ideas, the language, the general atmosphere of the latter, with the particular insistence, privilege and authority of a proselytizing creed It played the part of a civilizing agent, not because it was Christian, but because it was Roman The religion of Rome, untouched in its self-assertive dignity and claims by the vicissitudes of the empire, was all that stood for the glamour of the Roman name, and the barbarian could without derogation become a citizen of that new Rome while he trod the remains of Roman power

[1] *Baluzii Capit. Reg Franc* Cap Metense
[2] *Epist* lxxviii, ap *Mon Germ Hist*
[3] Procop *De Bell. Goth* 1, 4

under his heel. He was disposed to accept the Roman religion chiefly because of its association with the prestige, the dignity and grandeur which the name of Rome possessed even for its bitterest enemy, very much in the same way as the savage of to-day is willing to listen to the missionary, not on account of any metaphysical or ethical persuasiveness in the latter's creed, but because he is the representative of the magical power of European civilization The barbarian felt flattered by adopting the creed of the Roman man, as the savage feels flattered by adopting the creed of the white man. It was Perikles and Plato, Heracleitos and Aristotle, Cato, Cæsar, and Trajan, the hard rational thought of Hellas, the shrewd ability of Rome, not Paul or Athanasius, that converted the barbarian to Christianity The words 'Roman' and 'Christian' were during the early Middle Ages used as synonyms

Priests alone could read and some could write Kings and rulers affixed to the various charters which they enacted "*signum crucis manu propria pro ignoratione literarum.*" Hence we still speak of 'signing' instead of 'subscribing' The word 'clerk' denoted indifferently a priest or a person able to read But not even all the clergy could write, there were many bishops who were unable to sign their names to the canons of the councils on which they sat One of the questions put to persons who were candidates for orders was "whether they could read the gospels and epistles and explain the sense of these, at least literally." King Alfred complained that there was not a priest from the Humber to the sea who understood the liturgy in his mother-tongue, or could translate the easiest piece of Latin.

The glimmer of literacy in the monasteries isolated in woods and on the crags of savage lands did not, in general, go beyond those elementary attainments According to Benvenuto da Imola, grass grew in most of the libraries and the literary activities of the monks mostly consisted in scraping away the literatures of Greece and Rome to make room for the legends of the

saints. Of lay books there existed the manuals of Boethius and Cassiodorus, few Roman authors appear ever to have been read besides Vergil, Terence and Plautus The wretched so-called schools established by Charlemagne, of which such grossly exaggerated fuss is made in all our histories, represented an ineffectual attempt to manufacture more priests, and to produce priests that should at least be able to read and write They only existed for a day, and offered a curriculum of which a dame's infant school would be ashamed. The 'palatine academy' never existed at all except in the imagination of historians, of contemporary evidence there is not a trace We are liable to be greatly impressed when we read that 'schools' were established, and that the 'seven arts,' that mathematics, astronomy among other things were taught The impression is utterly misleading Here, for instance, is an account of the 'founding of a school' Charlemagne ordered the abbot of Fontenelle, one Gervold, to open a school in his monastery He obeyed · he opened a school in which singing only was taught, for "although he knew not overmuch any other art, he was proficient in the art of singing and was not deficient in pleasantness and power of voice "[1] Alcuin of York, the organizer of those precious Carolingian schools, proclaimed "the most learned man of his time," "whom no one in that age excelled in learning," thus instructs his pupils in grammar and rhetoric he tells them to be careful to distinguish between *vellus* and *bellus*, *vel* and *fel*, *quod* and *quot*, and imparts to them the information that *hippocrita* is derived from *hippo*, *falsum* and *chrisis*, *judicium* His 'mathematics' did not extend beyond a laborious and uncertain use of the rule of three Here is a fair and representative specimen of it "An accurate acquaintance with numbers teaches us that some are even, others uneven, that of the even numbers, some are perfect, others imperfect, and further, that of the imperfect numbers, some are greater, others less. . Take, for example, the number VI,

[1] *Chron. Fontanell ad a* 787

the half of VI is III, the third is II, and the sixth part I. The perfect Creator, therefore, who made all things very good, created the world in six days in order to show that everything that he had formed was perfect of its kind When the human race after the flood replenished the earth, they originated from the number VIII ; . . thus indicating that the second race is less perfect than the first, which had been created in the number VI . The sixty queens and eighty concubines (mentioned in the Song of Solomon) are the members of the Holy Church," etc , etc Even the study of theology to which all other 'learning' was strictly subordinate must not suggest to us any subtle dialectical exercises, by theology was meant purely and simply the capacity to quote from Holy Writ and from the Fathers, the authority of a text was the sole conceivable form of argument Of such kind was the learning which, we are told, survived and was preserved in the monasteries

But if bare literacy existed in the Church only, it was also the dead weight of its influence which paralysed intellect and culture It is difficult for us to realize the effect of that incubus in that age, the completeness with which it succeeded in snuffing out the human mind Not only was religious dogma, the thought of hell-fire, an exclusive, constant, daily obsession, but any distraction of the attention, any deviation of the mental gaze from that one object of hypnotic contemplation, any other interest, was denounced as in itself a deadly impiety The Church, it is important to observe, was not then opposed to knowledge on the ground that it was 'dangerous,' that it imperilled the faith That view was a fruit of later experience In the primitive simplicity of dogmatic confidence the thought hardly occurred that any knowledge could be dangerous, could conflict with holy truth Knowledge might, on the contrary, be plausibly valued as an adornment of the Church, as enhancing the dignity of its office, as contributing to the greater glory of the faith And that notion did exist in some minds, monks like the

Benedictines cultivated what knowledge they could, regarding it as a tribute to religion, as its natural appanage But that notion was in general vigorously denounced and repressed Secular reading was condemned not as an occupation dangerous to religion, but as an occupation *other* than religion It was an impermissible withdrawal of the mind from its one legitimate cynosure The attitude of the Christian mind towards culture was that of St Jerome who, though naturally devoted to literature, renounced it utterly by an act of self-discipline, as if casting off a temptation of Satan, as if purging himself from a state of sin Alcuin systematically discouraged secular study In a letter to a former pupil that egregious educator takes him to task for reading Vergil, "the four Gospels," he says, "not the twelve Æneads (*sic*), should fill your mind" The same attitude is found throughout the Dark Ages At a much later date Edmund Rich, one of the founders of Oxford, while studying mathematical diagrams has a vision of his mother, who draws three interlaced circles representing the Trinity, "Be these," she bids him, "henceforth thy diagrams" Pope Gregory burnt all the works of Livy and of Cicero on which he could lay his hands The rumour having reached him that Bishop Desiderius of Vienne had read some discourse on a literary subject, he writes to him with some embarrassment "A fact has come to our ears which we cannot mention without a blush, that you, my brother, lecture on literature I hope to hear that you are not really interested in such rubbish—*nugis et secularibus literis*" Even attention to the study of civil law was as late as the twelfth century violently denounced by St Bernard, who bewails that the courts are busy with the laws of Justinian—the pandects of Amalfi had just been discovered—instead of confining themselves to the laws of God

There was among the chief men of those times some sense of the terrible wreck and ruin of things The vision, the memory of Rome and her civilized world,

was too great and too near not to remain present before their eyes and impress them with a strong sense of the existing degradation. Modern historians of the Dark Ages employ themselves with describing the successive efforts that were made by barbaric rulers to introduce some rudiments of order into the weltering chaos. Theodoric did all he could, had laws codified, endeavoured to establish some kind of administration; the Lombards, the Burgundians likewise got codes written down, appointed officials, issued edicts. Charlemagne, the pious barbarian fighting missionary who converted his fellow-barbarians to Christianity by fire and sword, and out of whom ecclesiastical gratitude has manufactured a legendary hero and great man, tried in co-operation with the Roman Church to construct a Christian Holy Roman Empire. Various chieftains after him carved out little kingdoms, each making desperate efforts at organization, law, administration.

But one net result stands out of the recital of those various political enterprises. They are all utterly futile. The laws, organizations, constitutions, as we should say, existed merely on parchment. States, kingdoms, Holy Empires, are brought into existence at the point of the sword, and with papal blessings, but they are mere card castles that come tumbling down as fast as they are set up. We may gauge the real value of the well-meaning efforts of Charlemagne, which are represented in detailed accounts as a reorganization of the world, a 'renaissance,' by the fact that the moment he is laid in the crypt of Aachen, not a trace is to be found of it all. Under all those fictitious official titles and codes, those political shufflings which help to fill the chronicle, the actual facts of human society remain unaltered, they run their sweet course utterly unaffected and unchanged: brigand chiefs warring and plundering, murders and outrages, decimated populations of miserable wretches clustering round for protection.

The truth is that you cannot make laws, or organize, or do anything with masses of humanity if culture is non-existent. You may go on devising parchment laws

and kingdoms, and appointing officials with pompous titles, and signing deeds and edicts till doomsday, if humanity is in a condition of illiterate barbarism, is intellectually destitute, all your politics and organizing and legislating are vain beating of the air We shall have occasion later to note that no liberating movement can originate from the people themselves unless they are intellectually prepared for it The reverse is equally true; no reform, no organization, no progress can be imposed on them by well-meaning rulers, if the people are not culturally in a condition to receive it Neither from above nor from below can civilization be implanted upon barbarism destitute of intellectual culture

Without intellectual light of some kind in either people or rulers it was impossible to create a new Europe. No extant elements derived either from the rigid conservative structure of the Roman Empire or from a dogmatic Church could give rise to a progressive civilization in the Europe of the Dark Ages, any more than did those same elements in the empire of Byzantium

Among all the kingdoms of time Byzantium stands a unique, strange, uncanny, half-understood figure of warning, like a gorgeously decked skeleton at the feast of life Upon her as on no other empire fortune seemed to have showered every favour and every advantage Set in a site of unparalleled vantage, the cynosure of every empire-builder from the remotest time to the present day, it survived all but unscathed amid the ruin which all around it submerged the world While Western Europe sank in headlong dissolution, it endured to all outer seeming an opulent, prosperous, dazzling civilization. The pomp, the wealth, the flashing opulence, the stately ceremonial of its gorgeous court, its basileus, resplendent under the jewelled shower of the dalmatic, receiving in the Magnaura, more like a vision of a superhuman being than a man, the homage

of prostrate princes, amid the smoke of incense, the blaze of hanging candelabra, the rustle of gold fronds, and the peals of the silver organs, surrounded by hierarchies of patricians and protospatharians, by the scholaric guards in their silver breast-plates, and excubitors with their golden shields; the maze of its Sacred Palaces, with their ivory doors, rising in tiers of splendour on the enchanted shore whence, from marble terraces, the eye roamed over a panorama of unmatched loveliness, the Marmora and the Prinkipo islands, the waving hills, covered with groves and gardens, with palaces and villas, the Palace of Fountains, Chrysopolis on the Asiatic shore, and Bryas where stood a replica of the Kasr at-Taj of Baghdad, Blachernæ on the Golden Horn, the private imperial harbour of Boukoleon, where scarlet-and-gold dromons rode at anchor, the glint of the polychromatic churches, their clusters of airy domes, "hung as if by a golden chain from heaven", the Hippodrome decked with the obelisks of Thebes, the tripods of Delphi, and the statues of Praxiteles—offered a spectacle of dreamland fastuousness never perhaps excelled, and which needed not to be contrasted with the squalor and desolation of the barbarous West. Byzantium was the natural emporium of the world's trade, its industries were flourishing, its dominions extended over the richest provinces of Asia, it controlled the granaries and timber-yards of the world, it possessed the only disciplined and scientifically trained armies, their officers carried the tactical manuals of Maurice and Leo the Wise in their haversacks, they were equipped with the equivalent of an artillery, the dreaded Grecian fire—some kind of *Flammenwerfer*, of which they had the secret. While all the rest of Christendom were brutal savages, the princes and citizens of the Eastern Empire were marked by courtliness and polished manners, refinement in their tastes and mode of life. Byzantine culture was the sole heir and repository of the Greek and Hellenistic world, it produced scholars, poets, mathematicians. Notwithstanding its luxurious opulence its court was, with singularly few exceptions and brief

outbreaks, exceptionally free from vice, corruption and crime. It was, on the whole, a decent, orderly, well-behaved, well-intentioned society. Its elaborately organized administration, the representative of Roman law, worked smoothly. Its rulers were generally just, generally patriotic, careful of public welfare, conscientious to a scruple How many rulers has the world since seen setting themselves to write army manuals, or compendiums of law like Basil I, or an account of their dominions, or a treatise on diplomacy and the administration of the empire like Constantine Porphyrogenitus? They invariably led their armies in person, they were their own finance ministers, personally attended to the administration of the treasury, and never once allowed the coinage to become debased

Thus during ten long centuries the Byzantine Empire stood, the guardian of culture, the ark of civilization, while the Christian world around it crumbled to primordial anarchy and rose again to life It would not be possible to set forth conditions in appearance more favourable to the development of a great, glorious and mighty human society, the leader of progress, the guide of civilization, the light of the world

And yet that civilization, the pampered favourite of fortune, has remained before the considered judgment of history, in spite of the attempts of some Byzantophiles to rehabilitate it, what it was to its contemporaries—an object of contempt. So insignificant that almost one is apt to overlook and ignore it in a purview of the development of humanity It has contributed nothing to human growth, it lies outside the stream of mankind's evolution, a relic, a mummified survival, a failure In those thousand years of existence it did not exhibit a spark of progress, scarcely of life Surrounded by populations struggling out of darkness and calling for rescue and redemption, it taught them nothing, and it learnt nothing Its fleets were swept off the seas by the Arabs, its commerce was captured, first by the Arabs, then by the Catalans, Genoese and Venetians, its army, though it did save the empire again and again, ultimately came to be despised both

by Frank and Saracen; its literature was puerile, a model of bad taste, of nauseous, euphuistic pseudo-mythologizing rubbish, and grotesque miracle tales; it remains unreadable, save for the fable-distorted records of its self-contemplating history; its few scholars—there were not many—such as Leo the Grammarian, Photius, were the merest compilers, scholiasts, and pedants, the only works of any utility which they have left us are the catalogues of the libraries they knew not how to use, and the dictionary of Suidas In the bountiful prodigality of the advantages which it enjoyed and in their utter futility, the Byzantine Empire offers, as I said, a spectacle unique in history

If we inquire into the causes of the phenomenal sterility we find that they fall mainly under three heads First, the real power of the Byzantine Empire was wielded by a host of ignorant and fanatical monks. They swarmed throughout every province and every town. In Constantinople whole districts were filled with rows of monasteries, there were over a hundred, that of Stoudion alone contained a thousand monks Mount Athos, Mount Ida, Olympus, the islands of the Marmora and the Archipelago, were covered with conglomerations of monasteries You could not go ten steps without meeting those long-haired, short-skirted, Rasputin-like figures, round whom the people crowded to kiss their hands Every noble, every merchant, every man of wealth, every pious lady, either founded or endowed a monastery The Emperor Nicopheros, though himself leading the life of a monk, wearing a hair-shirt and sleeping on bare boards, was so alarmed at the depopulation of the empire, at the flow of its wealth into the monasteries, at the consequent recruiting and fiscal difficulties, that he attempted to check the evil by legislation The long contest over the Images which appears to us so paltry, was but a vain struggle of the emperors to shake themselves free of the intolerable domination of the monks They exercised complete control over the minds of the people, of the women, of the nobility, they fed them with wonder-tales and miracles, and lives of saints. Theology and even hell

had little place in their doctrines, every event, every action was surrounded with a web of supernatural signs and portents, the Byzantine Greeks lived in a world peopled with goblins, ghosts, angels and demons The supreme objects of their worship were miracle-working, winking images of saints, most of them painted by supernatural agencies, before which the crowds kissed the pavements of the churches, and to which they had resort for help in every circumstance of life, for success in business enterprises, the finding of lost property, the cure of rheumatism Strong in the fanatical backing of the populace and of the women, the monks set the civil authority completely at defiance, bearded the emperor in his palace, in the open street, whenever they disapproved of his acts

Secondly, that empire in spite of its priceless position of vantage was effectually and very completely isolated from the rest of the world by artificial barriers For the Latin and Germanic Christians the Greeks had the most utter contempt, they regarded them—not, it must be admitted, without ample justification—as mere savage barbarians The self-styled Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire was in their eyes an absurd upstart accoutred in a title which made them laugh He appeared to them much in the same light as we should regard a nigger Emperor of Dahomey aping civilized man in a frock coat and silk hat The term 'foreigner' had for the Greek the same connotation of unbounded contempt and hatred as it had for the true-born Englishman Those sentiments were accentuated when the crusading rabbles came and foisted themselves upon the empire, and their boorish, swashbuckling chieftains came tramping round the imperial palaces in their ill-cut clothes, clapping the emperor on the back, plumping themselves down on his throne, like bulls in the stately china-shops of Byzantine etiquette and decorum. On the other hand that hatred and contempt were thoroughly reciprocated The fact that a vast portion of Christendom, the wealthiest, the most outwardly brilliant remained obstinately, in spite of all efforts, completely outside the power of the Roman see,

refusing to recognize it or acknowledge its authority in any form, was the bitterest pill which the pride, ambition and greed of the papacy had to swallow. The hardened and recalcitrant 'schismatics' were, as usually happens, regarded with more ardent hatred than even the 'pagan infidels' Detraction of them was inculcated everywhere by the spiritual guides of Europe The Latins and Germans looked upon the 'effeminate' 'Griffins' with as much contempt as these did upon the western savages The latter constantly accused them, mostly quite unjustly—it was at best a case of pot and kettle—of perfidious treachery. Like our own rough soldiers in the Gallipoli expedition, while they recognized, whenever they came into direct contact with him, the Muslim as an honourable foe, and could not but be impressed with his well-nigh quixotic chivalry, they scorned the Greek as a base, sneaking fellow The splendour, the wealth, the dazzling luxury, the civilization of Byzantium, excited in them not admiration and emulation, but only covetousness and cupidity. They were always in two minds whether to redeem the Holy Land or fall upon the Greek Empire and loot it, as in the fourth Crusade they ultimately did Thus Byzantine civilization was as effectually insulated by a barrier of mutual contempt and hatred, as by any China wall or silver streak

It lived—and this is the third aspect of its sterility—draped in the pride of its origin and exclusiveness The heterogeneous medley of all races which constituted its ruling classes were 'the Romans'—for they despised the name of Greek—their empire was 'the Roman Empire', they alone had culture, good government, true religion—an exclusively national church far superior to the so-called Christianity of benighted foreigners, and owing no humiliating allegiance to any Italian bishop Nothing called for change in that highly desirable, sublime, historic, holy condition of affairs Their attitude towards things as they were, was that of our old Tories, of our Castlereaghs and Wellingtons, of our *Morning Post*, towards our glorious constitution They had inherited the con-

stitution of the Roman Empire as refashioned in the third century by Diocletian; and its ideal of rigid, unchanging stability, of forming the whole population into castes, so that one generation might step into the place of another, and nothing but the human material be changed Their culture, the great Greek literature, of which Byzantium was the reliquary, they came to regard not at all as a stimulus and an inspiration, but as a hieratic formula, an exercise of scholarship, a litany without meaning or interest They mostly despised it as pagan and read lives of saints instead.

Under the paint and enamel of its outward civilization it remained at heart coldly barbarous, and steadily grew in barbarism from age to age With its stodgy conscientiousness and prim virtue went the cool and customary practice of the most atrocious cruelty Palace revolutions were dramas of unmitigated horror—the Empress Theophano opening the door to the emperor's murderers, Zoe poisoning her husband, the Empress Irene, who founded churches, monasteries and orphanages, and was canonized by the Greek Church, gouging out the eyes of her son after luring him from the throne by appeals to filial affection To gouge out the eyes, cut out the tongue, emasculate, impale, crucify and flay alive, were the forms of punishment habitually inflicted The Chalké gate of the Palace on the Augusteon, like those of the Seraglio of Turkish sultans, were usually decorated with blackening heads, the walls of Constantinople, after a victory over the Russians, were garlanded with festoons of severed hands, one of the few naval victories over the Saracens was celebrated by adorning the coast from Adramytos to Strobilos with the impaled bodies of the captives, and after surprising the Bulgars in the gorge of Kimbalongo, Basil II put out the eyes of fifteen thousand prisoners, sparing one eye to every hundredth man, that the groaning, bleeding multitude might grope their way back to their king When provinces like Armenia revolted they were punished by wholesale massacres, rape, and devastation, and pyramids of severed heads were set up as a warning The lapse of centuries did not bring about a trace of

moral and humanitarian development; and the Turks, who took over much of the usages and traditions of the Byzantine court, are blamed to-day for the barbarity of the Byzantine peoples over whom it has been their misfortune to rule.

Thus did Byzantium proceed for ten centuries, unchanging, with its head turned backwards. But for the glassy coruscations of its hieratic mosaics, the gems and enamels of its ciboria, the gold of its scapularies, the lily pillars, and peacock panels, the marble tracery of its transennæ, the sepulchral splendour of its decorative craft which at once fascinates and chills us like the beauty of a dead woman, but for some insignificant details of bureaucratic administration—for the age of Justinian is to be accounted Roman rather than Byzantine—it has contributed nothing to human culture and civilization, nothing to the resurrection of Europe. To those countries which developed under its influence, to Russia and to the Balkan people, it has bequeathed those elements which constitute not their civilization, but their barbarism.

Such was the nature of that civilization in which by unbroken continuity and in the fullest enjoyment of every conceivable advantage the Roman Empire and Christianity resulted; such was the product of the fixed conservatism of the one and the theocratic dogmatism of the other. Historians nowadays labour to show that there was no break between the ancient and the modern world, to minimize the darkness of the Dark Ages, to exhibit Europe arising out of them by a continuous and uninterrupted process. The effect of such continuity is visible in the Byzantine Empire. Free cities arose in the West out of relics of Roman municipia, trade guilds out of the Roman associations, but anteriorly to the development of wealth and trade there were and there could be no free cities and no guilds. Mediæval culture grew on the soil of Greek and Roman literature, but under dogmatic domination and amid universal illiteracy those literatures were abolished, and before

the operation and stimulus of other intellectual elements mediæval culture did not arise. The 'young and virile Teutonic nations,' those "*christlich-germanischen Tugenden*" of Giesebrecht and our Teutonic friends, which for all our historians, from Stubbs and Seeley and Green to the French Taine, are the source of the rebirth of the modern world, did not infuse life into it, but death and barbarism The Christian-Germanic virtues did not result in progress, but in steady and growing barbarization. It is not true that a new world began at once to sprout on the ruins of the old On the contrary, for close on five hundred years Europe sank lower and lower, things went steadily and continuously from bad to worse. In the ninth century the conditions were immeasurably more desolately dark and more utterly hopeless than they had been in the sixth or seventh If we picture that dark continent of the ninth century isolated from the rest of the world and left to its own resources, there is no ground for surmising that it could ever, by virtue of any element of life existing within it, become civilized at all Whatever possibilities might exist in that dark welter of degradation, whatever factor might under propitious conditions be turned to advantage, it contained no endogenous seeds of life and progress that had power to germinate by virtue of their intrinsic force The fate of Europe might quite conceivably have been to become fossilized into a kind of barbaric Abyssinia

The light from which civilization was once more rekindled did not arise from any embers of Græco-Roman culture smouldering amid the ruins of Europe, nor from the living death on the Bosporus It did not come from the Northern, but from the Southern invaders of the empire, from the Saracens

CHAPTER V

DÂR AL-HIKMET

(THE HOME OF SCIENCE)

THE Semitic people who raised the banner of Islam were, like Europe, under the spell of a theological dogma, and it was in its name that they rose from their desert tents, and in a remarkably short space of time conquered an empire vaster than that of Rome, which stretched from Kashghar and the Panjab to the Atlantic and the South of France But in addition to the vital contrast between the rich luxuriance of the Christian dogma, its stately and elaborate hierarchical organization, and the bare, bald theism of Islam, with its negation of systematic theology, of myth, of tradition, almost destitute of ritual, and, above all, entirely without priesthood,—there were other and even more fundamental differences.

No conception could be remoter from the truth than that which commonly pictures the coming of Islam as a sort of Mâhdi rising, a jihad of wild darvishes fired to frenzy by religious fanaticism. The experiences from which such a picture is drawn, Muslim fanaticism, one might almost say Muslim faith, all belong to a subsequent age, when Islam's civilization had sunk to dust and its creed had become transformed by Ash'ârite theology. Its origin and its halcyon days were far different.

The Kûraish community in whose midst it first arose, though untouched in the patriarchal simplicity of its constitution, was by no means primitive in its mentality It was a society of wealthy and travelled merchants, well in touch with the outer world, cultivating fine manners, delighting in social intercourse, in cultured

female society, in poetry already grown artificial and frivolous, in tournaments of song; a society that had waxed too worldly and sceptical for serious convictions, having like the more primitive Arab tribes around it outgrown the conglomerate of traditional cults which it conventionally continued to profess. The simple-minded earnestness of one of their commercial travellers, Muhâmmad, made upon that society much the same sort of impression as a Unitarian missionary might expect to make in Mayfair. The prevalent feeling which he voiced was rather one of rationalistic dissatisfaction with the outworn palimpsest of cults than the enthusiasm of a religious revelation And it was in fact as a very human destroyer of idols in the broadest sense, as a protester against all religious superstructure above the generalized idea of theism reduced to its simplest expression, that Muhâmmad, like a sort of Channing, without any thaumaturgic or supernatural pretensions, in the most undisguisedly commonplace, human way, presented his ideas of reform

There was of course a nucleus of genuine fervour and enthusiasm in the closer associates of the prophet, around which were later formed the Shî'ite and Sunnite parties, there were leaders like the great 'Omar, the St. Paul of Islam, the moving spirit of its expansion and organization, in a sense its true founder. But all those elements became almost immediately submerged and reduced to a subordinate position destitute of influence or importance. The whole subsequent development and marvellous expansion was not a religious but a political movement, one whose sole aim, in fact, was conquest and plunder. The mass of Muslim tribes knew and cared nothing about Islam—amusement was caused on more than one occasion by their inability to recite a single prayer beyond the opening formula, "*Bismillah er-rahman, er-rahim.*" The dazzling rapidity of the conquest was chiefly due, not to Muslim prowess or to Byzantine inefficiency, but to the assistance and friendliness of the Christian populations of Syria and Egypt, sick to death of theocratic oppression and of theology

After the first days of the 'orthodox' Khalifs, when

the Commander of the Faithful was pointed out to astonished pilgrims in the streets of Medîna, clad in a tattered *jubba* eating sesame bread and onions, and when the great 'Omar journeyed on a camel to receive the homage of conquered Jerusalem, accompanied by a single attendant and with a bag of dates for luggage, the Khalîfate passed to the Kûraish Umayyads, the bitterest opponents of Islam, who made no secret of the purely political nature of their adhesion and claims, and overtly flaunted their indifference Never was a religion propagated with so little religious faith We have in fact in Islam the rather extraordinary spectacle of a professedly religious movement which, while it gave rise later in its utter decadence to a widespread and earnest religious faith of great vitality, was in its origin and throughout its hey-day utterly indifferent to religion, a movement in which large populations were willingly converted by lukewarm and unbelieving apostles, and whose final triumph as a religion was effected by hordes of barbarian invaders who destroyed it as a civilization That peculiar evolution was the exact converse of that of Christianity.

The 'Abbâssid princes who became the founders of Islamic culture, owed their triumph over the Umayyads chiefly to the support of Persia where they had been reared. The glorious and ancient empire of the Sassanids, which had always been the great trysting-place of Hellenistic and oriental commerce and culture, had, when conquered to Islam by 'Othman, just reached under the two Chosroes the climax of a rich and large-minded culture Gathering and inviting all the intellectual and industrial products of India and China, it also offered the only existing hospitable refuge to persecuted Christian sects, and the Nestorians, driven by fanaticism from their school at Edessa, had been encouraged to found an even more brilliant one at Jundi Shapûr. In that tolerant, latitudinarian atmosphere of Persia, which had seen so many 'new religions,' Islam was accepted in a philosophic spirit which soon further attenuated its already simplified theology into a mild theistic rationalism, known to Islamic pietists as the

Mu'tazil heresy. Of Muslim faith no more than that slight nominal conformity was retained by the 'Abbâssid Khalifs and those who built up the civilization of Islam "They are the elect of God," said Al-Mamûn, "his best and most useful servants, whose lives are devoted to the improvement of their rational faculties"

There were other propitious circumstances in the rise of Islamic culture. The Arabs had once, like the ancient Chaldæans, worshipped 'the heavenly bodies,' hence the interest of the desert-folk in astronomy So likewise was the rude cultivation of the healing art and of botanical lore, in which Muhâmmad and Abû Bakr themselves had been proficient, a tradition of the race And as the sons of Araby changed the tents of Shem for the luxury of Damascus and Baghdad, they had occasion to avail themselves of the services of the Nestorian physicians; and it was gratified admiration for their skill and learning which first prompted the Khalifs to inquire into the sources whence they derived them They thus became acquainted with the works of Hippocrates and Galen, and with those of the latter's admired master, Aristotle. Practically untouched in their desert home either by the old theocratic empires or by the conquests of Rome, they were still the nomad Semites of primitive times When they suddenly attained to wealth and power, and came in contact with the traditions of the great past civilization, spectrally surviving in the Byzantine East, they were not, like the northern barbarians, held in awe by the great name of Rome, which had loomed for generations as the embodiment of godlike grandeur and power, and by the religion which was identified with it. While they coveted the material culture which lay sealed and idle in the hands of the Roman mummy, they despised the barbarian of Rûm

There was indeed something of the old pagan, Hellenic joy of life in the spirit of that new splendour which arose like the fantastic creation of a jinni at the beck of the Khalifs, and spread its glinting opulence and delicate wizardry over the civilization of the *Thousand and One Nights* A hedonism refined withal and tempered by the superb gravity of the Bedâwin, and a philosophic

seriousness mindful while it quaffed the cup that it was but a small matter, and a frail tenure resting upon the caprice of Kismet The incorruptible treasures and delights of intellectual culture were accounted by the princes of Baghdad, Shiraz and Cordova, the truest and proudest pomps of their courts. But it was not as a mere appanage of princely vanity that the wonderful growth of Islamic science and learning was fostered by their patronage They pursued culture with the personal ardour of an overmastering craving. Never before and never since, on such a scale, has the spectacle been witnessed of the ruling classes throughout the length and breadth of a vast empire given over entirely to a frenzied passion for the acquirement of knowledge. Learning seemed to have become with them the chief business of life Khalifs and Emirs hurried from their diwans to closet themselves in their libraries and observatories; they neglected their affairs of state—which they in general sorely mismanaged—to attend lectures and converse on mathematical problems with men of science; caravans laden with manuscripts and botanical specimens plied from Bokhara to the Tigris, from Egypt to Andalusia, embassies were sent to Constantinople and to India for the sole purpose of obtaining books and teachers, a collection of Greek authors or a distinguished mathematician was eagerly demanded as the ransom of an empire To every mosque was attached a school, wazirs vied with their masters in establishing public libraries, endowing colleges, founding bursaries for impecunious students Men of learning, irrespectively of race or religion, took precedence over all others; honours and riches were showered upon them, they were appointed to the government of provinces; a retinue of professors and a camel train of books accompanied the Khalifs in their journeys and expeditions.

It was under the influence of the Arabian and Moorish revival of culture, and not in the fifteenth century, that the real Renaissance took place. Spain, not Italy, was the cradle of the rebirth of Europe. After steadily sinking lower and lower into barbarism, it had reached the darkest depths of ignorance and degradation when

the cities of the Saracenic world, Baghdad, Cairo, Cordova, Toledo, were growing centres of civilization and intellectual activity It was there that the new life arose which was to grow into a new phase of human evolution From the time when the influence of their cultûre made itself felt, began the stirring of a new life

The fact has been set forth again and again But it has been nevertheless stubbornly ignored and persistently minimized The debt of Europe to the 'heathen dog' could, of course, find no place in the scheme of Christian history, and the garbled falsification has imposed itself on all subsequent conceptions Even Gibbon treated Islam depreciatingly, an instance of the power of conventional tradition upon its keenest opponents. Until the last century there did not even exist anything approaching accurate knowledge of Saracenic history and culture "Those accounts of Mahomet and Islam which were published in Europe before the beginning of the nineteenth century are now to be regarded simply as literary curiosities "[1] At the present day, when wider and more exact knowledge is becoming accessible, scarcely any history of the Middle Ages gives Islamic culture more than an off-hand and patronizing recognition The history of the rebirth of Europe from barbarism is constantly being written without any reference whatsoever, except to mention "the triumphs of the Cross over the Crescent," and "the reclamation of Spain from the Moorish yoke," to the influence of Arab civilization—the history of the Prince of Denmark without Hamlet Dr. Osborn Taylor has even achieved the feat of writing two large volumes on the development of *The Mediæval Mind* without betraying by a hint the existence of Muhâmmadan culture

That a brilliant and energetic civilization full of creative energy should have existed side by side and in constant relation with populations sunk in barbarism, without exercising a profound and vital influence upon their development, would be a manifest anomaly That no such suspension of natural law was involved in the relation between Islam and Europe, is abundantly

[1] Professor Bevan *Camb Med Hist*

attested in spite of the conspiring of every circumstance to suppress, deform, and obliterate the records of that relation Its extent and importance have been beyond doubt far greater than it is to-day possible to demonstrate in detail Like the geological record of extinct life, our knowledge in the matter is derived from the scattered and accidentally preserved fragments of evidence which have been spared by forces universally tending to blot them out. When those conditions, when the obliteration of evidence, its distortion, the persistent prejudice and misrepresentation which fastens upon every single fact, are borne in mind, there can be no doubt that our estimate of that influence must err on the side of under-, rather than of over-estimation It is highly probable that but for the Arabs modern European civilization would never have arisen at all, it is absolutely certain that but for them, it would not have assumed that character which has, enabled it to transcend all previous phases of evolution For although there is not a single aspect of European growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic culture is not traceable, nowhere is it so clear and momentous as in the genesis of that power which constitutes the paramount distinctive force of the modern world and the supreme source of its victory—natural science and the scientific spirit.

It must be admitted that, in recoil from the general conspiracy of silence of our histories, several writers who have sought to vindicate the claims of Arab culture have somewhat exaggerated the achievements of Arabian science. Against such loose panegyrics it has been objected, that Arab science produced no surpassing genius and no transcending discovery, that it was derived from extraneous sources That is substantially true, but entirely irrelevant. Arab astronomy did not forestall Copernicus or Newton, though without it there would have been no Copernicus and no Newton. Although the complexity of the Ptolemaic system was repeatedly criticized by Moorish astronomers, although Al-Zarkyal declared the planetary orbits to be ellipses and not circles, although the orbit of Mercury is in

Al-Farâni's tables actually represented as elliptical, although Muhâmmad Ibn Mûsa glimpsed in his works on *Astral Motion* and *The Force of Attraction* the law of universal gravitation, those adumbrations of the truth were not fruitful of any great reform The only important facts brought to light by Arabian astronomy, the discovery of the movements of the sun's apogee by Al-Batâni, and of the secondary variations of the moon's motion by Abû 'l-Wafâ, exercised no perceptible influence upon the course of research, and had to be rediscovered by Tycho Ibn Sina is said to have employed an air thermometer, and Ibn Yunis certainly did use the pendulum for the measurement of time, but neither of those devices, which were independently re-introduced by Galileo, can be counted as a contribution to the growth of science

That, however, is entirely beside the point The debt of our science to that of the Arabs does not consist in startling discoveries or revolutionary theories, science owes a great deal more to Arab culture, it owes its existence The ancient world was, as we saw, pre-scientific The astronomy and mathematics of the Greeks were a foreign importation never thoroughly acclimatized in Greek culture The Greeks systematized, generalized and theorized, but the patient ways of investigation, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute methods of science, detailed and prolonged observation, experimental inquiry, were altogether alien to the Greek temperament. Only in Hellenistic Alexandria was any approach to scientific work conducted in the ancient classical world What we call science arose in Europe as a result of a new spirit of inquiry, of new methods of investigation, of the method of experiment, observation, measurement, of the development of mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks That spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs

Greek manuscripts were collected and translated at the court of the 'Abbâssids with an ardour even more enthusiastic than that which inspired the Aurispas and Filelfos of fifteenth-century Italy But the choice of the

Arab collectors and the object of their interest were very different. Of the poets and historians of Greece, beyond satisfying their curiosity by a few samples, they took little account. Their object was information; and besides the writings of the philosophers from Thales to Apollonius of Tyana, and the textbooks of medical science, it was above all to the writings of the Alexandrian Academy, the astronomy and geography of Ptolemy, the mathematical works of Euclid, Archimedes, Diophantes, Theon, Apollonius of Perga, that they devoted their attention. For speculative theories and broad generalizations they showed little aptitude, valuing as they did information for its own sake and as a means to the extension of knowledge, rather than as the basis of generalizing induction They accepted the conclusions of the Greeks as working theories necessary to the pursuit of scientific inquiry, only venturing to criticize or modify them as the expansion of knowledge forced them to adapt them to new facts. They have been reproached with imposing a dogmatic spirit in science upon Europe. Christian Europe had little to learn in the way of dogmatism, and those theories, such as the Ptolemaic system, the geographical doctrine of 'climates,' the doctrine of alchemical transmutation, which it received from the Arabs, were not Arabic, but Greek But the spirit in which the Arabs made use of existing materials was the exact opposite of that of the Greeks. It supplied precisely what had been the weak and defective aspect of Greek genius For the Greeks it was in theory and generalization that the interest lay, they were neglectful and careless of fact, the Arabian inquirers' zeal, on the contrary, was careless of theory, and directed to the accumulation of concrete facts, and to giving to their knowledge a precise and quantitative form. What makes all the difference between fruitful, enduring science and mere loose scientific curiosity, is the quantitative as against the qualitative statement, the anxiety for the utmost attainable accuracy in measurement In that spirit of objective research and quantitative accuracy the whole of the vast scientific work of the Arabs was conducted. They

accepted Ptolemy's cosmology, but not his catalogue of stars or his planetary table, or his measurements They drew up numerous new star catalogues, correcting and greatly amplifying the Ptolemaic one, they compiled new sets of planetary tables, obtained more accurate values for the obliquity of the ecliptic and the precession of equinoxes, checked by two independent measurements of a meridian the estimates of the size of the earth They devised for the carrying out of those observations elaborate instruments superior to those of the Greeks and exceeding in accuracy those manufactured in the fifteenth century at the famous Nuremberg factory Each observer took up the work independently, sought to eliminate the personal equation, and the method of continuous observation was systematically carried out—some observations extending over twelve years—at the observatories of Damascus, Baghdad, and Cairo So much importance did they attach to accuracy in their records that those of special interest were formally signed on oath in legal form

The same objective and quantitative spirit is manifested in all their activities When Al-Mamûn ordered his post-master, Ibn Khûrdadbeh, to draw up an account of his dominions and of all the sea and land routes in use—the first of those numerous geographical works of the Arabs which opened a new view of the world and a new geography—he insisted that each place should be localized by accurately determined longitudes and latitudes Al-Byrûny travelled forty years to collect mineralogical specimens, and his tables of specific weights obtained by differential weighing are found to be correct Ibn Baitâr collected botanical specimens from the whole Muslim world and compared the floras of India and Persia with those of Greece and Spain, his work describing 1,400 plants is pronounced by Meyer[1] "a monument of industry" Contrast that spirit of scientific minuteness and perseverance in observation with the speculative methods of the ancients who scorned mere empiricism, with Aristotle who wrote on physics without performing

[1] *Gesch der Botanik*, ii 233

a single experiment, and on natural history without taking the trouble to ascertain the most easily verifiable facts, who calmly states that men have more teeth than women, while Galen, the greatest classical authority on anatomy, informs us that the lower jaw consists of two bones, a statement which is accepted unchallenged till 'Abd al-Letif takes the trouble to examine human skulls.

The Arabs gathered their knowledge from whatever sources were at hand The bulk of their astronomy and some of their mathematics came from Greek and Hellenistic sources That ancient science of the Greeks had itself been originally derived from the Babylonians, migrants from Arabia to Mesopotamia, like the Arabs. Thus that ancient science which the latter restored to Europe was itself the achievement of their own ancient cousins from whom the Greeks had once borrowed it. But by a singular good fortune another source of scientific knowledge had become available In the Gupta Renaissance of the fifth century in India a notable intellectual movement had taken place Two writers in particular, Aryo-Bhatta and Brahmagupta, had produced important novelties in mathematics In the hands of the Arabs those new methods became combined with the unwieldy and unpractical methods of the Greek mathematicians, and further elaborated While the highest mathematical knowledge of the Christian West did not extend beyond a laboured use of the rule of three, and the simplest operations of arithmetic were performed by means of the abacus—the same device of wires and beads that is used in our kindergartens—the Arabs perfected the decimal system of notation by introducing the use of the cipher or zero (Ar *zirr*) ; they created Algebra and carried it to the solution of equations of the fourth degree, and trigonometry, substituting sines and tangents for the chord of the Greeks, and thus multiplied a thousandfold the powers of human inquiry

Not only did the Arabs create those mathematics which were to be the indispensable instrument of scientific analysis, they laid the foundation of those methods of experimental research which in conjunction with mathematical analysis gave birth to modern science.

Chemistry, the rudiments of which arose in the processes employed by Egyptian metallurgists and jewellers—combining metals into various alloys and 'tinting' them to resemble gold—processes long preserved as a secret monopoly of the priestly colleges, and clad in the usual mystic formulas, developed in the hands of the Arabs into a widespread, organized passion for research which led them to the invention of distillation, sublimation, filtration, to the discovery of alcohol, of nitric and sulphuric acids (the only acid known to the ancients was vinegar), of the alkalis, of the salts of mercury, of antimony and bismuth, and laid the basis of all subsequent chemistry and physical research

Like the Hellenistic materials of which it availed itself, Arabian science, and with it the science of the Middle Ages, was tainted with all the fantastic disorders with which it had always been associated in the oriental and Hellenistic world Its astronomy arose from Chaldæan astrology, its chemistry from hermetic alchemy It was, in fact, largely from the same mystical atmosphere of the Hellenistic Orient whence the new religions, the theologies of the epoch of Christian origins, had sprung, that the materials of science were derived But whereas in the case of theologies and religions those fancies constitute the very substance of the speculative fabric, in that of investigation into natural phenomena they are no more than the outward dress and terminology, the setting of scientific inquiry, which can up to a certain point proceed quite usefully and without being greatly vitiated in consequence Astronomical observation has not been seriously impaired by being pursued as astrology Tycho, Copernicus, Kepler were astrologers The narrow spirit in which Ptolemy produced his compilation of astronomical knowledge, and the authority of his name, have, as a matter of fact, proved immeasurably more baneful to the progress of science than all the notions of astrology And in experimental research the concepts of alchemy, far from being an obstacle to the progress of knowledge, were the fortunate occasion without which that difficult line of inquiry might never

have been pursued. It was, rightly considered, a working hypothesis as good as could be devised in the absence of the knowledge to which it was itself to lead the human mind. All bodies and substances were conceived to consist of a uniform and universal 'materia prima' diversified by the admixture of the four Aristotelian elements, water, earth, air and fire. But from the presence and combination of those elements with primitive matter, could not be deduced the peculiar properties of substances, hence they were ascribed to 'occult virtues' connected in some way with the seven metals, which were imagined to bear some relation to the seven planets, and in order to discover those properties or virtues there was no other way but to study substances in themselves and in their various combinations, to endeavour to purge them from the masking elements and reduce them to their pure state, to discover the processes and reagents which could bring about in them the observed transformations It should be noted that among Arabian and mediæval scientific inquirers the relative importance attached to mystic theory and ascertained facts varied widely in every degree, from that of vulgar charlatanism intent on exploiting popular superstition, to that of the intellectual inquirer concerned with results, and to whom speculative theory had only the interest of an hypothesis. Though to the mediæval popular mind all science was magic, and the Arab scientists were spoken of as necromancers, the most distinguished of them rose well above that atmosphere. Thus with all the great Arabian astronomers observation and analysis of results was the thing of importance, to the exclusion of the trade in horoscopes and astrological prediction, which they left to the vulgar practitioner. And in the case of alchemical ideas, that premature evolutionary theory was strongly contested by several leading Arabian chemists; and in the eleventh century the dispute between its defenders and opponents developed into a lively controversy. So great an authority as Ibn Sina himself said: "Those of the chemical craft know well that no change can be effected in the different species of substances, though they can

produce the appearance of such change" Europe, where the Lateran Council of 1215 had proclaimed the dogma of transubstantiation, generally adopted the theory of transmutation of metals, which had fallen into discredit among the Arabs. "Theosophy and mysticism," says Sir Edward Thorpe,[1] "were first imported into Alchemy not by the Arabs, but by Christian workers"

Science is not a tradition, but the essence of progressive thought. The science of one generation is consequently looked down upon by succeeding ones from those very heights of knowledge to which it has helped to raise them Our own physiological and biological theories will probably appear as quaint to our descendants as do the conceptions in which the infancy of science was swaddled Not until a quite recent time has it cast them off Kepler drew horoscopes, Copernicus accounted for planetary motions by propelling angels, Newton himself applied his mathematical genius to the working out of the astrological prophecies in the Book of Daniel, the doctrine of alchemical transmutation was firmly held by Robert Boyle, by von Helmont, by Boerhaave, by Newton, by Leibnitz, and by Stahl; Priestley, obsessed with the theory of phlogiston, refused to recognize the significance of his own discovery of oxygen It was not till the eve of the French Revolution that, thanks to Lavoisier, new conceptions of the various forms of matter supplanted the hypotheses under which, from the days of the Arabs, chemical analysis and the experimental investigation of nature had proceeded

In the new methods which they introduced, in that star-gazing, in those alembics, in that new lore—uncouth and larded with gross fancies as much of it was—which differed so entirely in temper from the old classic culture, and long preceded the revival of its study in Europe, lay the future of the world, the germ whence, after a maturation of several centuries, was to burst forth the titanic force of modern science

[1] *Hist of Chemistry*, p 36

Arabian knowledge began at an early date to percolate into Christian Europe. If there be any ground of fact in the legend of the alchemical pursuits of St. Dunstan, Arabian lore must have been much more widely diffused in the tenth century than can be shown by surviving records. Under absolute religious tolerance, Christians enjoyed complete freedom in the Spanish Khalifate; they had their own bishop, several monasteries existed in the outskirts of the capital which served as hostels for travellers, and monks were commonly seen in the streets of Cordova. From all parts of Europe numerous students betook themselves to the great Arab seats of learning in search of the light which only there was to be found. Alvaro, a Cordovan bishop, writes in the ninth century: "All the young Christians who distinguish themselves by their talent, know the language and literature of the Arabs, read and study passionately the Arab books, gather at great expense great libraries of these, and everywhere proclaim with a loud voice how admirable is that literature."[1] The famous Gerbert of Aurillac brought from Spain some rudiments of astronomy and mathematics, and taught his astonished pupils from terrestrial and celestial globes. Though his learning was not deep, and it is probably erroneously that he is credited with introducing the decimal notation—he still used the Roman abacus—his keen taste for knowledge "stolen from the Saracen," in William of Malmesbury's phrase, made him, as Pope Sylvester II, the hero of fantastic Faust legends widely popular throughout the Middle Ages.

During the next two centuries the process of diffusion assumed an extensive scale. An African monk, Constantine, who had acted as secretary to Robert Guiscard, devoted himself with enthusiasm to the translation of Arab textbooks and to introducing the new learning into the mother house of the Benedictines at Monte Cassino, whence the path lay open for its transmission to the far-flung houses of the order. Another Benedictine, Adelhard of Bath, brought with him from

[1] *Indiculus luminosus*, in Florez, *España Sagrada*, vol. xi.

Cordova a large collection of books and much doctrine, which he and his nephew actively spread abroad in France and England. From his copy of Euclid all subsequent editions down to 1533 have been published. Daniel de Morlay likewise proceeded to Cordova to learn mathematics and astronomy, published the fruits of his studies and lectured at Oxford Plato of Tivoli translated Al-Batâni's astronomy and other mathematical works At the end of the twelfth century a young Pisan merchant, Leonardo Fibonacci, while travelling in Algeria and Spain became enamoured of the new mathematical sciences of the Arabs, and after several new journeys issued a translation of Al-Khwarismi's great work on algebra He definitely popularized the perfected decimal notation, which became known, with the facilitated arithmetic resulting from it, as *algorism,* from the Arabian writer's name Fibonacci, whose work had a wide influence, must be accounted the founder of modern mathematics in Christian Europe and the first of the long line of Italian mathematicians Gerard of Cremona was the most industrious among the popularizers of Arab literature , he spent fifty years in the Khalîfate of Cordova and brought forth no less than sixty translations, among which the *Almagest*, and the *Astronomy* of Al-Haithâm Michael Scot repeatedly visited Cordova for the purpose of obtaining manuscripts and making translations The influx of students into Spain and the activity of translators went on till the last days of the Khalîfate Arnold of Villeneuve, and Raymond Lully, the friend of Bacon, studied in Spain and taught at Montpellier, Campanus of Novara studied mathematics at Cordova and taught in Vienna , and systematic schools for the translation of Arab textbooks were established in Toledo by Alfonso the Sage

The Jews shared under the complete tolerance of Moorish rule in the cultural evolution of the Khalîfate, and as they scattered over Europe, especially after the Almohadean conquest, became the carriers of that culture to the remotest barbaric lands We find them freely teaching and discussing with the inmates of secluded monasteries whose curiosity for the strange

learning prevailed upon their religious prejudices.[1] French and German monks obtain from them the text-books of the new sciences, and even literary nuns in Thuringian convents, such as the famous Hildegard and Hroswitha, did not disdain to avail themselves of their learning. They established numerous schools, such as that of the Kimhis and of Ben Esra at Narbonne, where Arabian science was popularized and Arabic books translated. Numerous Jews followed William of Normandy to England and enjoyed his protection, building there the first stone burgher houses which may still be seen at Lincoln and St Edmundsbury, and establishing a school of science at Oxford; it was under their successors at that Oxford school that Roger Bacon learned Arabic and Arabic science. Neither Roger Bacon nor his later

[1] A passage of Joinville's, of interest in more than one respect, is worth citing in full in this connection. I slightly modernize the spelling: "Il [St Louis] me conta que il eut une grande disputation de clercs et de Juifs au moustier (monastère) de Cluny. Là estait un chevalier à qui l'abbé avait donné le pain là pour Dieu, et requit à l'abbé que il li lessast dire la première parole, ce qu'il lui octroya à peine. Et lors il se leva et s'appuya sur sa crosse, et dit que lui li faist venir le plus grave clerc et le plus grant mestre des Juifs, et si firent ils. Et lui fist une demande qui fut telle: Mestre, fist le chevalier, je vous demande si vous croyez que la Vierge Marie qui Dieu porta en ses flancs et en ses bras, enfantât vierge, et que elle soit mère de Dieu. Et le Juif répondit que de tout celà il ne croyait rien. Et le chevalier li répondit que moult avait fait que fol, quant il ne lo croyait, ni ne la lamoit, et estait entré dans son moustier et en sa maison. Et vraiement, fist le chevalier, vous le payerez, et lors il hauça sa potence et féri le Juif près de l'oreille et le porta par terre. Et les Juifs tournèrent en fuite, et emportèrent leur mestre tout bléciè, et ainsi demoura la disputation. Lors vint l'abbé au chevalier, et lui dist qu'il avait fait grande folie. Et le chevalier dit que encore avoit il fait plus grande folie, d'essembler telle disputation, car avant que la disputation feust menée à fin, avait il céans grand foisons de bons chrétiens, qui se furent parti tous mescréants, parce qu'ils n'eurent mie bien entendu les Juifs. Aussi, vous dis-je, fist le roy, que nul, s'il n'est très bon clerc, ne doit disputer avec eux, mais l'homme laïc, quant il oye médire de la loi chrétienne, ne doit pas déffendre la loi chrétienne, sinon de l'espée, de quoi il doit donner parmi le ventre dedans, tout comme elle y peut entrer." Intolerance and persecution of Jews was a feature of the later, rather than of the earlier Middle Ages.

namesake has any title to be credited with having introduced the experimental method. Roger Bacon was no more than one of the apostles of Muslim science and method to Christian Europe, and he never wearied of declaring that a knowledge of Arabic and Arabian science was for his contemporaries the only way to true knowledge. Discussions as to who was the originator of the experimental method, like the fostering of every Arab discovery or invention on the first European who happens to mention it, such as the invention of the compass to a fabulous Flavio Gioja of Amalfi, of alcohol to Arnold of Villeneuve, of lenses and gunpowder to Bacon or Schwartz, are part of the colossal misrepresentation of the origins of European civilization The experimental method of the Arabs was by Bacon's time widespread and eagerly cultivated throughout Europe; it had been proclaimed by Adelhard of Bath, by Alexander of Neckam, by Vincent of Beauvais, by Arnold of Villeneuve, by Bernard Silvestris, who entitles his manual *Experimentarius*, by Thomas of Cantimpré, by Albertus Magnus.

In the hands of Jewish doctors trained in Arab schools, where medical art had been carried far beyond that of the ancients, the practice and teaching of medicine remained throughout the Middle Ages. The pharmacopœia created by the Arabs is virtually that which, but for the recent synthetic and organotherapic preparations, is in use at the present day, our common drugs, such as nux vomica, senna, rhubarb, aconite, gentian, myrrh, calomel, and the structure of our prescriptions, belong to Arabic medicine The medical school of Montpellier was founded on the pattern of that of Cordova under Jew doctors The example was imitated at Padua and later at Pisa, where together with the *Canons* of Avicenna (Ibn Sina) and the *Surgery* of Abû 'l-Kasim, which until the seventeenth century remained the textbooks of medical science throughout Europe, were taught the mathematics and astronomy of the Moors. Those were the nurseries which were one day to bring forth Fallopius, Vesalius, Cardan, Harvey, Galileo

That power which has transformed the material and

mental world is the product by direct filiation of the science of the astrologers, alchemists, and of the medical schools of the later Middle Ages, and those arose directly and solely as a result of Arabian civilization Down to the fifteenth century whatever scientific activity existed in Europe was engaged in assimilating Arab learning without greatly adding to it Prince Henry of Portugal established under Arab and Jewish teachers his great nautical academy at Cape St. Vincent, which prepared the way for Vasco da Gama, and for the expansion of Europe to the uttermost ends of the earth The first mathematical treatise printed in Europe (1494) is but a paraphrase and in parts a transcription of Leonardo Fibonacci's translations by Luca Pacioli, the friend of another Leonardo—Leonardo da Vinci It was from Al-Batâni's tables that Regiomontanus constructed the Ephemerides which made the voyage of Columbus possible, Kepler carried out his work by means of the Hakemite tables of Ibn Yunis, Vesalius translated Al-Râzi. The spirit of science passed through the period of the Classical Renaissance without being influenced by it, and developed in seclusion, independently of classicizing influences.

Science is the most momentous contribution of Arab civilization to the modern world, but its fruits were slow in ripening Not until long after Moorish culture had sunk back into darkness did the giant to which it had given birth rise in his might It was not science which brought Europe back to life Other and manifold influences from the civilization of Islam communicated its first glow to European life.

CHAPTER VI

THE REBIRTH OF EUROPE

THE industrial and commercial activity of the East, of Moorish Spain and Sicily, created European commerce and manufactures. These gave rise to the wealth and power of the merchant classes, and the commercial cities, the burgher communities became strong enough to defy the feudal powers, and the new force of free republics and communes overthrew the tyranny and lawlessness of the barons Thus, like culture, political liberty and organization came to Europe with bales of goods from the Levant Until trade and industry had developed, until burghers had waxed substantial through eastern traffic there were no communes, there were hardly cities The coast towns of Catalonia and Provence were the first to rise in importance and to life through trade with the Arabs Free and autonomous republics were established at Marseille, Arles, Nice The source whence from earliest days that wealth had grown may be sufficiently gathered from the account given by Theodulf, Bishop of Orleans, of a journey to the South of France as one of Charlemagne's *missi dominici* On his arrival at Marseille, he says, "the people came to us in crowds, men, women, children, old men, loaded with presents, persuaded that they had only to offer them to us in order to obtain their wishes. One offered crystals and orient pearls, . another brought a heap of gold pieces on which shone Arabic sentences and characters another said 'I have cloths which come from the Saracens and it is not possible to see aught more richly coloured or more delicately and better wrought' another showed me hides of leather

from Cordova, some white as snow, others red . . . another offered me carpets."[1]

The cities of Southern Italy next followed; Amalfi, Salerno, Naples and Gaeta, rising gradually to wealth and freedom through commerce with their Muslim neighbours of Sicily, and gradually extending their connections in conjunction with Arab traders to Africa and Syria. The Emperor Ludwig II accused Naples of being as Muhâmmadan as Palermo. Amalfi and the first Italian free cities of Southern Italy entered into alliance with the Muslims of Sicily (875) and actually assisted them when they advanced to the gates of Rome, defying the excommunications of Pope John VIII. And when a crusade was moved against Islam, they refused to bear arms against the people who had helped them to wealth and greatness. Pisa, Genoa, and Venice used the opportunity to outreach Amalfi and Naples. Pisa, which the chronicle of Donizo describes in 1114 as "unclean with" swarming Saracens, "Turks, Lybians and Chaldæans," who possessed a whole quarter of the city, known as Kinsica,[2] rose, like Genoa, to importance by trade with Saracenic Sardinia. Such was the destitute condition of Europe prior to the development of that commerce, that, having neither native products nor money to exchange for the wares of the Arabs, the first Italian merchant-adventurers kidnapped the children of neighbouring villages, and paid for their goods with cargoes of human flesh. Genoa and Pisa joined forces to conquer Sardinia, which produced the finest wool, that of England excepted, the wool-trade passed thence to Lucca, where the art of weaving had been brought from Palermo, and whence, after the sack of the town by Uguccione della Faggiola, the master-weavers established themselves in Florence. Thus was laid the foundation of that Florentine wealth and greatness, which before long made the Tuscan merchants the bankers of Europe.

The Arabs opened up the land-routes to India, to China, Malacca, and Timbuctoo, the emporium of Central

[1] *Mon Germ Hist*, *Poet Lat* I 499

[2] Muratori, *Ant Med Aev*, *diss* 30

African trade; and sent their caravans to the rich lands beyond the Sahara long before the Portuguese doubled Cape Verde. They held the monopoly of the sea-routes to India, and the Emosaids founded along the eastern coast of Africa a line of trading colonies from the Sudan coast and Socotra to Mombaza, Mozambique, Zanzibar and Madagascar

They improved the art of shipbuilding, taught Mediterranean seamen to construct lighter sailing-ships or caravels (*gâraf*), to caulk their boats with tar—still known in Romance languages by the Arabic name of *gatrân* (Fr *goudron*, It *caltrame*)—to handle sails and cables (Ar *hábl*) Moorish merchants established their *fûndaks* in the Christian ports, plied between the great sea-ports of Andalusia, Valencia, Almeria, and Malaga to those of Provence and the South of France, brought their wares to the markets of Montpellier and Narbonne Arab *dinàrs* are to this day found as far north as the shores of the North Sea and the Baltic in greater abundance than Roman coins or Greek besants They introduced the system of bills of exchange, and the commerce of the Mediterranean was regulated by the institution of sea-consuls first adopted at Barcelona

The fine linens, the cottons, the silks, the delicate and gorgeous fabrics of the Saracenic world, satins and sarcenets, Persian taffetas, damasks from Damascus, baudekin from Baghdad, muslin from Mosul, gauzes from Gaza, grenadines from Granada, moires, crêpes and chiffons (not 'rag,' but diaphanous *chiff* from Tripoli), chamlets, karsies, and radzimirs, created a demand for fine raiment among the coarsely clad populations of Europe. In the Nibelung lay Krimhild anachronicly adorns herself with

"Die aràbischen siden wiz alsô der snê,
unde von Zazamanc der gruenen sô der klê
von Marrock dem lande und ouch von Libian
die aller besten siden die ie mêr gewan"[1]

[1] "The Arabian silks white as snow, and those from Zazaman green as the clover leaf from the land of Morocco and also from Lebanon, the best silks that were ever won"

The looms of Syria and Spain, of which sixteen thousand were at work in Seville alone, and where a hundred and thirty thousand silk-workers were employed at Cordova, wove the materials for the garments of nobles and the sacramental vestments of Christian prelates, and it was not an uncommon spectacle to see a bishop celebrating mass with an *'âyat* of the Kurân elegantly embroidered on his chasuble The women of Europe learnt to wear an Arab *kamus* (chemise) and *jubba* (jupe, jupon). The warriors of Christendom were eager to wield blades forged in Damascus, Almeria, or Toledo, and to ride in Cordovan saddles The sugar-cane was introduced and Europeans first tasted confectioneries, sweetmeats and sorbets By and by the manufactures of the East were introduced and imitated in Christian Europe Silk-looms were established in Norman Sicily. Venice copied with the aid of native craftsmen the glassware of Antioch, Lyons the damasks, Paris the 'tapis sarrasins,' and Rheims the linen of Syria The rich dyes of the East were brought to Bruges, where they were used to prepare English wool for the market The wares of Spain and Majorca led to the establishment of Italian factories for the manufacture of majolica Sugar factories were transferred from Sicily to Italy and from Spain to the South of France.

The Arabs introduced three inventions into Europe, each of which was to bring about a world-transforming revolution the mariner's compass which was to expand Europe to the ends of the earth, gunpowder which was to bring to an end the supremacy of the armoured knight, and paper which prepared the way for the printing-press. The revolution effected by the introduction of paper was scarcely less important than that brought about by printing The extreme scarcity of books was in a large measure due to the scarcity of parchment, we know how the texts of ancient manuscripts were erased again and again to supply materials for writing missals and legends of saints, so that scarcely a manuscript older than the eleventh century survives to-day The price of books was consequently prohibitive; a Countess

of Anjou paid two hundred sheep and five measures each of wheat, rye, and millet for a book of homilies; and as late as the reign of Louis XI, when that king wished to borrow the medical works of Al-Râzi from the library of Paris University, he deposited in pledge a quantity of plate, and was moreover obliged to procure a nobleman to join with him as surety in a deed binding him to restore it. The Arabs first adopted the manufacture of paper from silk as practised in China, and silk paper was manufactured at Samarkand and Bokhara, for silk they at first substituted cotton, Damasc paper, and later linen. The linen-paper industry was long a monopoly of Xativa, near Valencia, whence it was introduced into Catalonia and Provence, and later to Treviso and Padua [1]

The first parts of Europe to emerge from barbarism were those most directly under the influence of Moorish culture the Spanish Marches of Catalonia, Provence, and Sicily

It is an entirely erroneous conception which pictures the Moorish and Christian States of Spain as divided by intolerant hatred and incessant warfare Spanish fanaticism is a later growth which mainly owed its introduction to foreigners To those who lived in contact with the civilization of Islam it was hardly possible to entertain the conceptions fostered among remoter populations by their priests, who represented the abhorred 'infidel' as savage fiends addicted to the worship of a hideous idol called Mahom The gradual encroachment of the Spanish kingdoms over the Moorish dominions was as much the fruit of Muslim dissensions as of the ardour of the attack, and was brought about by crafty alliances with ambitious Moorish princes as much as by the sword Friendly relations and intimate intercourse were the rule, not the exception Since the days of Roncesvalles, when Moors and Christians had together defeated the marauding army of Charlemagne who, having

[1] We call paper by the name of Egyptian papyrus, but we measure it by reams (Ar *rasma* = a parcel)

crossed the Pyrenees at the invitation of Suleimân al-Arabî, a rebel against the first 'Abd al-Rahman, was returning laden with Christian booty and without having fought a Moor, Christians and Moors had constantly fought side by side and lent each other support in their complex internecine quarrels. Spanish princes marched at the head of Moorish troops lent to them by a Muslim ally to recover their domains, Moorish Emirs led Christian troops against their rivals Companies of soldiers of fortune both Christian and Muslim hired themselves to masters of either religion. The most brilliant of Moorish generals, Al-Mansûr, won his victories, and sacked the shrine of Compostella, with Christian troops The famous Rodrigo Diez de Bivar, transformed by legend into the doughty champion of the faith, was a *condottiere* who fought at least as often on the side of the Moors as on that of the Catholics, remained seven years in the service of the Emir of Saragossa, looted churches with as much gusto as mosques, usually dressed in Moorish costume, put his faith in a Moorish bodyguard, and is known to fame by the Arabic appellation of the Cid It is no mere fiction, like the transmutation of the ignominious expedition of Charlemagne in Spain into an heroic epic, and its adornments with the magicians, knight-errants, dwarfs, dragons and enchanted palaces of Arabian romance, but an accurate tradition which represents in the tales and poems of chivalry, Christian and Moorish knights as freely consorting on friendly terms, joining together in jousts and tournaments and entertaining each other as honoured guests. Spanish and Moorish princes and their retinues of men of science and minstrels constantly resided at each other's courts Christian rulers entrusted the education of their sons to Arabian tutors ; and when afflicted with some obstinate disorder betook themselves to Cordova to consult the most eminent physicians. Even between Christian ecclesiastics and Moorish princes there was friendly intercourse, the translation of the Arab Almanack by Bishop Harib, and a history of the Franks written in Arabic by Bishop Gobmar of

Gerona, were dedicated to Khalif Hakim. Intermarriage, common among the people, was not infrequent among the nobility, and even King Alfonso V of Leon gave his sister in marriage to Muhâmmad, King of Toledo, and Alfonso VI married Princess Zayda, the daughter of Ibn Abet, King of Seville Al-Mansûr married Teresa the daughter of Bermudo II, who, with the consent of her family, adopted her husband's faith. Moorish princes who acknowledged the suzerainty of the King of Castile sat in the Spanish Cortes

The lustre of Moorish elegance circulated unimpeded throughout the peninsula and the South of France A shifting population of Mozarabians (Muslim Spaniards) and Jews passed continually from Andalusia to Catalonia and Languedoc, the papal legate charged the Counts of Provence with harbouring "Moors, Jews, and all manner of infidels" Provence, where the Moors had dwelt nearly two hundred years, became united to the Spanish March, where the same language was spoken, when Raymond Berenger, Count of Barcelona, married Douce, the daughter of Gilbert of Gévaudan, the last scion of the Counts of Provence There and then it was that the first efflorescence of European culture and elegance, which was so tragically blotted out in blood in the ghastly Albigensian Crusade, blossomed forth under the stimulus of Moorish civilization.

Rude, illiterate, unwashed robber-barons gave place to men who delighted in poetry and music, and forgathered in tournaments of song. Loose woollen gowns and leather jerkins were exchanged for close-fitting braided pourpoints, first known as *gipons* (Ar *jubba*) and mantels of shimmering silk, the fashion for which gradually extended to Northern Europe. Women joined as equals, as in Moorish Spain, in the intellectual interests and artistic tastes of men. They discarded nun-like habits for fine apparel and jewels, developed a waist and rustled silken trains, instead of wearing their hair in long plaits they did it up elegantly, a change which came to be known in the North as 'cheveux à la Provençale', they wore embroidered and jewelled Persian tiaras of *cendal* (Ar *candal*), which in the fourteenth century

were exchanged for the sugar-loaf and horned head-dresses known as 'bonnets à la Syrienne.' An Arab author, Ibn Jobair, thus describes the appearance of the women of the period. "They went forth clad in robes of silk the colour of gold, wrapped in elegant mantles, covered with many-coloured veils, shod with gilt shoes, laden with collars, adorned with kohl and perfumed with attar, exactly in the costume of our Muslim ladies." Such dalliance did not fail to call forth the shrill denunciations of monks who, elsewhere supreme arbiters of life, slunk away in impotence before the indifference of the people and the *sirventes* of the poets. Song and music, which filled the rose-gardens of Andalusia, where every court rang with the sound of romances and quatrains, where poets and musicians formed part of the retinue of every Moorish prince and every Emir, where skill in versification was counted an indispensable accomplishment of every knight and every lady, spread to the adjacent lands of Castile, Catalonia and Provence. Stringed musical instruments, which are throughout the Middle Ages spoken of as 'mauresques,' were first introduced into Europe, the lute or laud (Ar. *al 'ud*), the viol or violin, known at first as rubeb (Ar. *rabab*), the psaltery (Ar. *santyr*), ancestor of the piano, the zither, the tabor, and the guitar (Ar. *kuitra*).

Exactly to what degree the Catalonian and Provençal poetry which was sung to the accompaniment of that Moorish music was moulded by that of Arab Spain, is the subject of controversy among specialist scholars. What measure of prejudice may enter into the conclusions of those who pronounce the literature of Provence to have been "an extraordinary instance of spontaneous growth," may pardonably be suspected when the manner in which every other contribution of Arab culture has been treated by European scholarship, is borne in mind. There was a popular vernacular poetry in Provence as everywhere else, but only there did a courtly fashion for verse appear, distinct from popular song, and court-singers identical in function with the *ruwâh* of Moorish courts. Rhyme of a rude kind had previously been used in monkish doggerel, but its

elaborate pattern in Troubadour song, the assonant repetition of the same word in alternate lines, the research of 'difficult rhymes,' the *tornada* or *envoi* (invariably used in the *ghazal*), are traits of Arabic poetry, and of the Spanish school in particular, which invented the *muwashâh* and *zajâl* stanzas, and was as partial to *hûshi*, or learned obscurity, as Guiraut de Bornelh and so many Troubadours to the *trobar clus*. More even than its technical features, the new song reflected the somewhat euphuistic sentiment, the conventionalized erotics of Arabo-Persian poetry, and Bernard de Ventadour and his fellow-poets who lament "*De la donha me dezesper*," were, like their Andalusian brethren, '*sarî al-ghawâni*,' 'victims of the fair

Spanish and Provençal poetry is the birth-song of European literatures, awakening poetic echoes throughout Europe, from the Minnesingers of Germany to pre-Dantesque Italy, calling the 'vulgar tongues' of the new Europe to literary life The earlier Italian singers, Malaspina, Zorgi, Sordello, Lanfranc Cigala, used the language as well as the prosody and style of the Provençal Troubadours It was in Sicily at the Saracenized court of Frederic II, that the first Italian lyrics were produced in the native tongue—*il dolce stil nuovo* of Guido delle Colonne, Jacopo Lentini and Pier delle Vigne Dante hesitated long whether he should write his great poem in Latin, his decision was determined by his admiration for the achievements of Provencal song, and from them his language, form and treatment were derived. Without the Spanish Moors no Troubadours, without the Troubadours no Dante.

It was the conquest of Muslim Sicily and of Southern Italy by Norman mercenaries which moved William the Bastard to that of England. When after a struggle of thirty years the Muslim kingdom and its capital of Palermo, which rivalled Cordova itself in splendour and culture, at length submitted to the Hauteville adventurers, it was only on condition of being granted full

and equal rights and liberties; and so willingly were the terms carried out in letter and spirit, that Roger, the first King of the Two Sicilies, and his successors were, not without good ground, accused of being more Muslim than Christian. Sicily down to the last Hohenstaufen rulers remained a centre of Muslim culture and became the focus of awakening civilization. It was—strange irony of fate!—by Muslim troops that Pope Hildebrand was rescued from Castle S. Angelo when Henry IV sought to wipe out the shame of Canossa. Not only were the troops, the religion, and to a large extent, the administration of the Muslim retained under the Normans and Suabians, but the posts of honour and command remained in Moorish hands. Their *amyr al-bahr* became in latinized form *ammirati*, or *admirals*, their *diwâns*, or government offices, became *dohanas* or *douanes*. Sicilian administration served as a model to Europe. The English fiscal system, like the name which it bears to-day—the Exchequer, was derived from Muslim Sicily, whence Thomas Brun, who served as *Khaid* under Roger II, introduced it when he transferred his services to our Henry II. Between Norman England and Norman Sicily there was continuous intercourse through which many elements of Muslim culture came directly to distant Britain. Its great and far-reaching civilizing influence over barbaric Europe reached its height when the kingdom passed into the hands of the great Italian-born Emperor Frederic II, whose radiant figure filled the Middle Ages with wonder. If the name of any European sovereign deserves to be specially associated with the redemption of Christendom from barbarism and ignorance, it is not that of Charlemagne, the travesty of whom in the character of a civilizer is a fulsome patriotic and ecclesiastical fiction, but that of the enlightened and enthusiastic ruler who adopted Saracenic civilization and did more than any sovereign to stimulate its diffusion.

His brilliant court where, under the stalactite roofs of Moorish halls, and amid oriental gardens adorned with murmuring fountains and aviaries filled with rare

birds, and menageries of strange animals, the gifts of friendly Khalifs, the professors of Arabian science forgathered as honoured guests, and discussed mathematical problems and questions of natural history, where troubadours from Provence and Moorish minstrels sang to the music of lutes and tabors, and inspired the first-fruits of Italian poetry, that wonder court, the seat of learning, refinement and beauty, so utterly contrasting with the gloomy, rush-littered halls of other European potentates, which swarmed with monks and vermin, ignorance and superstition, was an object of astonishment and malicious rage Among the accusations and denunciations that were hurled against Frederic, it was alleged with horror that he indulged in a daily bath—even on Sundays He established universities in Naples, Messina, Padua, renovated the old Byzantine medical school of Salerno in accordance with the advances of Arab medicine, encouraged by his patronage Plato of Tivoli and Lorenzo Fibonacci, the founders of European mathematics, gathered Jewish and Arab scholars to undertake translation of every procurable Arabic book, sent his friend Michael Scotus to Cordova to obtain the latest works of Averroes, and distributed copies to every existing school

The course, not only of political history, but of European development and culture would doubtless have been very different had he, as was his dream, united Europe under a new empire with its capital in Italy But the opposing forces of ecclesiastical power were as yet too strong The popes moved heaven and earth against the Hohenstaufen Emperor Gregory IX stirred the Lombard cities to revolt, and rewarded and secured their loyalty by setting up the Inquisition in their midst, and burning a few hundreds of their citizens—*pour encourager les autres* Mendicant monks penetrated into the very palace of the Emperor, threatened and bribed his closest friends, and thrust daggers and poison into their hands

The Church dreaded, no less than a united Italy and the loss of its temporal dominions, the new intellectual light which was being flashed across the

darkness of Europe. Gregory declared Frederic to be the Antichrist. "That pestilent king," wrote the Pope, "affirms that the world has been deceived by three impostors, Moses, Jesus and Mahomet He further proclaims with a loud voice—he dares to utter lies to the extent of saying that none but fools can believe that the all-powerful Creator of the world was born of a virgin He maintains the heresy that no man can be born without the concourse of a man and a woman And he adds to those blasphemies that what is proved by the laws of things, and natural reason, is alone worthy of belief" The supporters of the Emperor throughout Italy were regarded as infidels, the name of Ghibelline was synonymous with 'epicurean,' the current designation of the time for philosophic unbelievers, and when Guido Cavalcanti walked through the streets of Florence, absorbed in thought, the populace, Boccaccio tells us, whispered that "he was thinking out arguments to prove that there is no God" The interdicts, the anathemas, the repeated excommunications of the Church, proved a more formidable weapon than even the swords of the Guelphs Vanquished, baffled, betrayed, harassed, disheartened, embittered by long years of strife and daily peril, the Emperor craved for terms from his implacable foe; he agreed to depart from Italy on a crusade to Palestine; and betaking himself to Jerusalem, that strangest of crusaders was there received as an honoured friend by the Sultan Melik al-Kamil As he walked arm in arm with the noble and learned Melik on the terrace of the mosque of 'Omar, discoursing of the latest advances in his beloved mathematical sciences, and of the folly of men who like darkness rather than light, he cast a scornful glance on the fanatical crowds that crawled on their knees before the gates of the Holy Sepulchre, and exclaimed, like Philip-Auguste, "Happy Sultan who knows no pope!" As a token of his regard, Melik presented him with a marvellous clock, in the form of a large domed tent, in which the sun and moon were moved by mechanism, and made to rise and set, showing the hours.

Christian and Saracen mingled their tears when the great Hohenstaufen '*che fu d'amor si degno*' was laid in the crypt of Monreale, leaving behind him the foundations of a power greater and more mighty than any empire he had dreamed of, a power that was one day to avenge him, and break the tyranny of pope and priest like a reed

A cause more immediate in its effects than physical science and deeper than romantic and poetical literature aroused the European mind from its lethargy It has not in general been sufficiently emphasized that one of the chief agencies by which the dead hand of theological dogma was shaken off, was theology itself "The naive mysticism and emotional inconsistency of a religious creed," as Al-Ghazali remarked, "cannnot be brought to an intellectual focus without being dispelled" Already in the ninth and tenth centuries there were sporadic signs of insubordination in Christendom In England and Ireland, partly owing to the tradition established by Theodore, an Eastern monk with an ardent taste for literature, who, under Pope Valerian, had been appointed to the see of Canterbury, partly in consequence of the protection from the Gregorian obscurantism of the central Church government, afforded by isolation and remoteness, the status of culture among the monks of the Benedictine order and of St Columba was distinctly higher than on the Continent Egbert, Bede, Alcuin are examples of that pre-eminence Not that it amounted to much, but by comparison with the almost complete illiteracy of other countries, the taste of the English, and, above all, of the Irish monks for Latin authors, and even an occasional, though rare, acquaintance with Greek, placed them upon a higher level. The consequences were not long in showing themselves in reading Scripture and the early Fathers, they dared to exercise their mind. The Irish monks are spoken of as "*sophia clari*," and a chronicler describes the disturbing inroads of those herds of philosophers—"*philosophorum greges*"—across the stormy sea St

Boniface, while engaged in Christianizing Germany, encountered nothing but trouble with his Irish assistants. One Brother Vergil had the assurance to speak of 'antipodes', Father Clement flatly scorned the authority of Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory, and even that of the Canon, and aired views about marriage with a deceased wife's sister, and the marriage of bishops, which made one's hair stand on end. Father Macarius was no better than a pantheist, and he set the devil loose in the monastery of Corbie, whence presently Father Ratramn came forth denying the miracle of the Eucharist. But the boldest and greatest of those Irish disturbers of the Faith was John Erigena, a superior man, who had travelled in the East and knew Greek, and who with great power and learning endorsed Ratramn's view of the mass, accounting it a mere symbol, and expressed purely pantheistic views. There was no one in that day at all capable of even appreciating the magnitude of his heresies, much less of making any show of argumentative fight against the terrible Irishman. Theology merely consisted in the submissive reading of the Scriptures and the Latin Fathers, and had no weapon but their authority. The eucharistic heresy smouldered for over a century in the Benedictine monasteries until it was—it was hoped—adequately laid at rest by Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury. But that hope was cruelly shattered by Roscellin, who hanselled the new weapon of Aristotelian logic lately come from Spain in his fierce onslaught upon Anselm. One of the disciples of Roscellin was the great Peter Abélard, who with impassioned eloquence proclaimed not only that reason had a right to examine all authority, but that it was the supreme and sole authority

Exactly in what measure the earlier disputes of 'pre-scholastic scholasticism' were influenced by Muslim thought, we have little means of knowing with accuracy. The first systematic body of heretical doctrine within the Roman Church which resulted in widespread theological controversy, arose in Muslim Spain, and originated in the ninth century with Bishop Elipandus of Toledo, who infected with the Adoptioni heresy

the clergy of the South of France. Muhâmmadan philosophy and theology had, we know, been carried to the Benedictine monasteries through the Jews, and the metropolitan house of Monte Cassino; and Alvaro of Cordova tells us that many Christians in the ninth century "studied the Muhâmmadan theologians and philosophers," not always, he adds significantly, "with a view to refuting them." Peter the Venerable, the Abbot of Cluny, with whom Abélard took refuge after his condemnation by the Council of Sens, lamented that, during his stay in Spain, he had seen troops of students from France, Germany, England, flocking to the Moorish seats of learning. In order to do something to stem the tide, he had the Kurân translated into Latin, naively remarking that the text of such-like 'inspired' books constitutes their most effectual refutation. The exact parallelism between Muslim and Christian theological controversy is too close to be accounted for by similarity of situations, and the coincidences are too fundamental and numerous to be accepted as no more than coincidences. A single metaphysical quibble raised in the *Isagogue* of Porphyry concerning 'universals' supplied the cardinal formula about which the whole edifice of controversial thought both in Islam and Christendom was raised. The same questions, the same issues which occupied the theological schools of Damascus, were after an interval of a century repeated in identical terms in those of Paris.

The culture of the courts of Damascus and Baghdad had been eyed askance by the zealots of Islam; and when Al-Mamûn established his famous school of translators, the Dâr al-Hikmet or 'Home of Science,' he had to placate the pietist conscience by assurances that it was merely a college of household physicians. To the Muslim faithful and their 'Ulama, the whole cultural movement remained from first to last a thing accursed; Harûn and Al-Mamûn had sold their souls; and in Moorish Spain there were constant outbursts of fanatic zeal in which the books of science were consigned to the flames. The attitude of religious ardour towards intellectual culture was precisely the same in the Muslim

as in the Christian world. Only there was this difference, that in the former it was the intellectuals and heretics who for a time held the whip-hand of power; the pious had perforce to rest content with sour looks and suppressed growls, and to wait patiently until the Turk, the Berber, and the Spaniard came to their assistance, and plunged Islam back into the purity of faith and the darkness and ignorance of barbarism. If, while in the tenth century European aspirants to knowledge sought the schools of the learned Moors, in the twentieth century Professor Westermarck journeys to Morocco to study the ways of primitive barbarism, it is because in the two worlds the contest between light and darkness had opposite issues; in the one case dogma was defeated by rational thought, in the other it prevailed over it

Although the intellectual energy of the Arabs employed itself by preference with objective mathematical and scientific pursuits, it was inevitable that it should be applied to the interpretation of religion From their Nestorian teachers and from Galen they derived a profound veneration for Aristotle, whose orderly and encyclopedic cast of mind chimed with their disposition He was '*al-elahi*,' the 'divine' Aristotle, *the* philosopher, and pilgrimages were made to his supposed tomb in Palermo as to the shrine of a saint. The Arabs applied his terminology, metaphysical ideas and classifications, and logical method to the endeavour to elucidate, making more definite and precise, reducing to a rational order, to a 'science,' the dogmas of their religion A maze-like structure arose out of the subtle disputations of theology, *al-katan*, the 'science of the Word' And intellectual thought set about the endless task of 'reconciling' religious dogma and rational thought Al-Farabi paraphrased Aristotle, enumerated the principles of 'being,' elaborated the doctrine of the double aspects of the intellect and the question of universals. Ibn Sina sought, upon the basis of Farabi's work, to spiritualize the naturalism of Aristotle by a free admixture of mystic neo-Platonism derived from Jewish and Alexandrian sources Others rationalized the

mysteries of the faith into pantheism, and Ibn Roschd (Averroes), the last of the Arabic philosophers, proclaimed the unity of the intellect, and put forth the fatal solution of 'double truth,' that a thing may be true in theology and false in science—or, as Professor Bury has aptly expressed it, that a thing may be true in the kitchen but false in the drawing-room

The whole logomachy passed bodily into Christendom The catchwords, disputes, vexed questions, methods, systems, conceptions, heresies, apologetics and irenics, were transferred from the mosques to the Sorbonne The deification of Aristotle, introduced by the Arabs, together with his works, which had previously only been known in meagre fragments in Cassiodorus, Capella, and Boethius, stood at first for the assertion of the rights of reason The reading of his works, and of the Arabian commentaries, was in Paris forbidden

It soon, however, became apparent to the defenders of orthodoxy that their original principle—that the methods of rational thought must not be applied to religious dogma—condemned them to an unequal fight They accordingly abandoned it, and reversed their policy It was determined to fight intellectual insubordination with its own weapons, to enlist Aristotle in the cause of faith The canonization of Aristotle was the first of the long series of surrenders of theology to rational thought The Dominicans devoted themselves to the task of harmonizing 'the philosopher' with religion It had already been performed for them, and all that Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, both proficient in Arabic literature—the former was as famous as an alchemist as a theologian, and the latter had been one of the earliest pupils in Frederic II's university of Naples—had to do, was to reproduce the arguments, formulas, and methods of Ibn Sina and his predecessors in the 'reconciliation of reason and religion,' Al-Farabi and Al-Kindi They were met by their antagonists with the bolder logic of "the impious and thrice-accursed" Averroes.

The banners under which the battles of intellectual progress have been fought have been subject to strange

mutations. The same Muslim infidel, Ibn Sina, furnished both the weft of the Tomistic, or official philosophy of the Catholic Church, and the text-book of the medical schools, nurtured the Vatican and the Holy Office with one hand, and Galileo with the other We are accustomed to think of Aristotelian authority and of 'the schools' as the foes against which the European intellect had to win its victory. When science and modern thought at last unfolded their wings with Galileo and Descartes, it was by the overthrow of Aristotle and his authority that that first liberation was marked But at an earlier stage it was those same authorities which the Arabs had transmitted to Europe, it was that very Aristotle, which had stood for intellectual freedom, for reason against obscurantism and mysticism Aristotle was the shield under which in the universities and the medical schools, thought and science were brooding and maturing When the humanists of the Renaissance, when Petrarch, when Erasmus inveighed against Aristotle and Averroes, it was not dogmatism or authority which roused their ire, but science, 'impiety,' 'materialism' They were occupying the same position as the opponents of Copernicus, of Darwin, of that science whose chrysalis was wrapped in the 'authorities' of the Arabs

Scholasticism, like Greek Sophism, is one of those vanquished things whose name has been indelibly branded by the triumph of its opponents Nevertheless those argumentative contests which seem to us absurd and unintelligible, were the first stirrings of the mind in Europe after the death-like trance and Cimmerian darkness that went before In the hair-splitting subtleties and grotesque disputes of the schools, the weapons were tempered that were to arm the human mind for the battles of its liberation and triumph "To the Schoolmen," J S Mill rightly observes, "we owe whatever accuracy of thought, and lucidity of logic, we can boast" We may laugh at some of the problems on which the scholastic disputants exercised their wit—"whether divine essence engendered the Father, or was engendered by the Father, whether attributes or

substance determine persons" (Peter Lombard), or "whether the Holy Ghost appeared as a real dove, whether Adam and Eve had navels, whether Christ took any clothes with him to heaven" (Thomas Aquinas),[1] but the laugh would not be altogether on our side if some of the paralogisms which sometimes pass to-day as arguments with untrained and slovenly thinkers, could be submitted to the mediæval worshippers of Aristotle 'Formal logic' is pedantic, and the syllogism is not the sum of rational method, but they have supplied a very beneficent and useful training And it is by passing through the mill of scholasticism that the European mind has acquired that appreciation of accuracy, that habit of precision, that care in the use and definition of words, that protective immunity against plausible fallacies, that indisposition to being put off with irrelevant and lofty phrases, which have been its strength, and to which it owes its growth and achievements

And it was that unflinching application of logic which in the days of Roscellin and Abélard had struck terror in the champions of dogma and tradition, which ultimately shook off their intellectual tyranny, in spite of their attempt to press the two-edged weapon into their own defence, and which produced Roger Bacon and William of Occam, who dealt the death-blow to the phantasms of dogmatic abstraction, and pointed to the methods of accurate observation, inquiry, experiment, and mathematical analysis, introduced into the world by Arabian science, as the basis of rational judgment and knowledge

By the end of the thirteenth century, among the propositions which the Paris Sorbonne was called upon to censure, we find the following "The discourses of theologians are founded on fables", "True knowledge is made impossible by theology", "The Christian religion is an obstacle to education"

The spell which had held the human mind captive during the Dark Ages was broken for ever

[1] It is, of course, on the orthodox or "realist" side of scholasticism that such speculative gems are to be met

CHAPTER VII

THE SOI-DISANT RENAISSANCE

It is in the first three centuries of the present millennium that the rebirth of Europe took place. The term 'Renaissance' applied to the Italian and Italianate culture of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is a misnomer stamped upon our notions by the traditions of that culture itself The gaudier splendour of European life at that epoch was the outspreading of overblown blossoms whose buds the previous centuries had called to life and unfolded. To that antecedent impulse it owed its worth The invention of printing, to a far greater extent than the study of ancient literature, strengthened and accelerated the process

The paramount part played by Arab culture in the awakening of Europe, on which I have dwelt at some length—proportionate to the grossness and insistence of current misrepresentation—it would be difficult to exaggerate But there is no need to magnify the intrinsic worth and quality of that culture Admirable as was that quality, and supremely momentous as its action and influence proved, it did not possess the principle of indefinite development and growth. Had it not succumbed to fanaticism it is doubtful whether it would have pursued a career of prolonged progress. Europe, making use of what it acquired from Islam, outstripped it, as Greece had surpassed the oriental cultures whence hers was derived. There was in point of fact something, some particular quality in the European mind which Islam lacked. Arabized knowledge in passing into Europe, however barbaric, became European, western, acquired some new virtue which vitalized and fertilized it. That something, that quality of the European mind, is not an intangible and undefinable racial mystery.

It is a quite definite fact It is nothing else than its geniture and parentage from the clear and discursive spirit of Greece. The European mind is what it is, differs from the East and Islam, in that it has Greece and Rome at its back. That is the supreme fact in its constitution and quality. The Greek spirit, its emancipation, its fetterless freedom, its irrepressible curiosity, its secularism, its criticism, its spontaneous, unimpeded use in the face of all facts and situations of human reason pure and simple, that is what has made the western world possible And Europe has grown because it issued out of that 'antiquity' which was the civilization of the Greek mind, and even in the darkness of degradation and deepest depth of ruin, the dust of that world preserved, however faint, some element of its intrinsic quality

'Renaissance' humanism was, then, in its form representative of that paramount fact I say 'representative,' no more, for it neither initiated, nor determined, nor in any essential degree established its action Roman, and subsequently Greek literature, were sought and cherished before the rise of Italian humanism and the advent of Greek refugees The patriotic enthusiasm which looked back upon the only national literature, the only great European literature then existing, and saw in its 'revival' and cultivation the only issue out of the dark sterility of the times, existed in Italy even before Petrarch. Vilgardus of Ravenna early in the twelfth century paid to the Latin poets the same extravagant and superstitious worship as the humanist idolaters of the Renaissance Those studies extended in the same measure as all other intellectual activities. But that quality and influence of which I have just spoken, is in truth something much deeper and more subtle than any effect of book study It lies in the very genesis and constitution of Europe, in its language, its forms of thought, its memory, its whole mentality. Study of ancient literature is but a small and accessory part of it, its roots lie much deeper in

the mental structure, which even in the mediæval Church and law and language derived from Greece.

The humanism of the Renaissance gave a new impetus to the perusal of the only secular literature then existing, and thus helped to establish the dominion of secular thought in the modern world. The republished works of Greece and Rome did not bring life and power by virtue of their specific contents, by virtue of any particular contribution to knowledge or ideas, of any concrete 'wisdom,' or any forgotten and regenerating inspiration which they transmitted, but purely and simply by helping, in virtue of their secular character, to sever the bonds which had held the human mind fettered in the *bolgia* of ecclesiastical thought

But everything that can ungrudgingly be set to the credit of 'Renaissance' humanism is more than counterweighed by influences the most baneful and pernicious, which it exercised on the development of Europe

"It may be doubted," justly remarks an historian,[1] "whether the human mind has gained by ceasing to develop along the path upon which it had been set during the Middle Ages, and by suffering that revolution which is called the 'Renaissance.'" While it crowned the antecedent growth of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Italian Renaissance was in reality a phase and manifestation of essential rottenness and decay It was in intrinsic respects as much a set-back and a falling off, as the rule of the petty usurpers whose aulic influence fostered the literary vendors of flattery and 'immortality' was a falling off from the vitality and spirit of the communes and republics they smothered Availing itself of the powers which a healthier and more creative age had developed, it wasted and prostituted them and remained essentially sterile

The literature and thought of Greece and Rome are among the greatest, most glorious, and most momentous achievements of humanity But Renaissance humanism and its far-reaching effects afford a conspicuous illustra-

[1] Wahl, in Lavisse et Rambaud, *Hist Générale*,

tion of the truth that no matter how excellent a thing may be in itself, its influence is rendered wholly pernicious from the moment that it becomes an object of idolatry, and is invested with a sacred and superstitious authority Instead of being vitalizing and inspiring it becomes deadly and paralysing. The 'ancients' and what was conceived by the humanists to be ancient taste were by them set up as idols. Lamps were set alight before the bust of Plato; Alfonso of Naples sent Beccarelli to Padua to beg for an arm-bone of Livy The cult of the 'antique' became a delirious and paralysing superstition A spirit of intellectual parasitism more abject than that of the schoolmen for the *ipsissima verba* of Aristotle, extended a canonical authority to all the newly consecrated 'classics' Plato, or rather a mystic farrago of Neo-Platonism, supplanted Aristotelian authority. So completely was intellect dulled by slavish deference that it was scarcely capable of even discerning the incompatibilities between the authorities it worshipped Intellectual views, theories, ideas, thoughts, information, were indeed of little or no concern to the pedants of Italian humanism They cared for none of those things, the only things that mattered, the things of real importance, the supreme object of intellectual interest and of culture, were words, syntax, style It was not as thinkers, as creators, as cogitating beings that the 'classics' were canonized and worshipped and their authority set up, it was simply and solely as dealers in words and periods The Greeks had been concerned with ideas, the Arabs and Arabists with facts, the pedants of the Renaissance were concerned with words.

It had been the very plausible ideal of those who in ages of semi-darkness turned, like Petrarch, to the literature of Rome, to revive the culture which had existed in the past and existed no longer, while the embryo of a new culture was only then struggling into feeble, though healthy life. They were inspired by the wish to bring back the glories of Rome, what they brought back was the palsy of its dotage. The 'revival of learning' was the revival of pedantry The spirit of the

'culture' that was set up by the humanists was precisely that of their teachers, the Byzantines round whom they crowded to learn Greek; it had in it as much of the elements of progress and life as that culture which had for ten centuries rotted in its mummy cloths on the Bosporus. It very nearly succeeded in smothering the young life of the European intellect which was moving in the new world.

Never, except in the last phases of Rome and in the Byzantine Empire, have the contents of the human mind been so completely displaced and supplanted by borrowed verbal vacuities and hollow presentments of ideas. Of rational thought, of even a tendency towards a critical and independent attitude, there is among the pundits of Italian learning in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries hardly a trace Whatever serious intellectual activity existed in Italy during those two centuries, in men like Telesio, Giordano Bruno, Campanella, Pomponazzi, stood apart from the humanistic movement, had no connection with it, and, except as regards the last, exercised no influence Alone among the Italian humanists, Lodovico Valla, who was thought cold and aloof, regarded Latin and Greek scholarship as means to greater ends, and he may be said to have initiated historical criticism by his exposure of the frauds and forgeries—the decretals, the pseudo-Dionysius, the donation of Constantine, the Apostles' Creed—which constituted the credentials of the Catholic Church The greatest mind of all brooded in complete silence and solitude, "I am no humanist," declared Leonardo da Vinci.

But one may look in vain among the great lights of the time, in Poliziano, Ficino, Poggio Bracciolini, Filelfo, for a spark of spontaneous thought. Nothing can match the utter intellectual impotence and sterility, the crass stupidity—there is no other word for it—of the authors of that strange 'revival of learning,' who prided themselves upon their Latin style and Greek hexameters, and made the great discovery that what they have dubbed 'scholarship' is the supreme goal of the human intellect. They were arid pedants,

grammarians, translators, imitators in whom all faculty for thought had become atrophied Imitation, more imitation, and still closer imitation was for them the highest ideal. Truth of thought or justice of feeling had no place in their scheme of mind, and the only quality which they could conceive as worthy of endeavour and of appreciation was an aping faculty for Ciceronian periods and Platonic sentiments. The works of Marsilio Ficino, the leader of the Florentine Academy, are a wretched hotch-potch of mystic rubbish beside which the writings of Madame Blavatsky are products of intelligence Covered with amulets and charms, "the greatest philosopher of the age" went abroad in fear of the evil eye and of ubiquitous goblins and sprites. And that intellectual level was representative of that of his contemporaries. The controversies conducted with ponderous classical elegancies and scurrilous personal vituperation between Poggio and Filelfo, are more grotesque than the most puerile scholastic disputations. The 'divine' Poliziano reached at a jump the most fulsome heights of that charming literary style which the 'Renaissance' has bequeathed as a curse to succeeding ages He cannot speak of Florence, but must say, 'the city of Sylla', he cannot mention that some one is ill, but must needs describe the 'Goddess of Fever' sitting at his bedside Pico della Mirandola wrote a tract against astrology, and one might imagine that he was moved by some rationalistic impulse; but the absorbing interest of that champion of common sense lay in the Cabala, and his influence on Erasmus, Reuchlin, Colet, and More, was that of the morbid fascination which vapid mysticism exercises.

The religious scepticism of the later Italian Renaissance was not the outcome of any critical process of thought, but of entire lack of mental earnestness The contempt of religion began with the clergy themselves. In secure and undisputed possession of all their claims and powers, they had come to treat their business overtly as one of pure and undisguised exploitation. What men thought was of no account to them so long as

the powers and revenues of the Church remained secure. Of dogmatic zeal and persecuting spirit there was little in the higher Italian clergy. They smiled on a declared atheist as long as he paid his Church dues and was not an earnest propagandist. Nicholas V appointed Valla to a post at his court, Leo X invited Pomponazzi to discourse before him on the mortality of the soul; and he and his advisers allowed Luther to gain time and ground through their avowed indifference to the theological issue. Only when political power was at stake did heresy call forth severity And the courtly scepticism of the Renaissance, while it laughed at dogmas and ridiculed monks, was perfectly loyal to the Church as a social and political institution. Men like Machiavelli who treated religious dogma with scepticism and ridicule, did not do so because of any shock to their intellectual conscience. They were utterly devoid of such a sense. To the relation between dogma and truth they were absolutely indifferent. The passion for truth, the mark of all real intellectual activity, even the most languid interest in abstract truth, are things conspicuous by their absence in the Italian mind of the Renaissance It believed as little in reason as it did in inspiration, and in general assumed religion to be an expedient, and, on the whole, beneficent, and even necessary institution, at the worst a necessary evil. That there is any connection between truth and what is practically desirable and expedient, is an idea which was not thought of That good can come out of a lie was never doubted The practical concern of the Italian intellect was not to distinguish between truth and falsehood, but between the respective expediency and desirability of various lies

Thus the pseudo-scepticism of the Italian Renaissance never approached to anything like consistency. It was quite common for the commonplaces of sceptical ridicule to be combined with a practical belief in the essential doctrine on which the power of the Church was founded —fear of hell. Lorenzo de' Medici scoffed as freely as any one, yet cringed in terror on his death-bed, and sought absolution from Savonarola, "the only priest he

knew who was not a hypocrite" Even the grossest popular superstition was by no means incompatible with that superficial scepticism; Machiavelli himself believed in ghosts. There is no length of incongruity to which that worthless and irrational scepticism could not proceed. Aretino "*che disse mal d'ognun fuorchè di Dio, scusandosi col dir 'Non lo conosco,'*" composed manuals of devotion. Blasphemy, like murder and treachery, was the outcome of moral unscrupulousness, and absolution was sought for the one as for the other. The writers of the Cinquecento pass by a quite natural transition from religious satire to prayer Pulci, in whose poem gastronomical parodies of the *Credo* alternate with hymns to the Madonna, may by his tone seem a distant progenitor of Voltaire, but the resemblance is only superficial Mocking, scoffing Voltaire was in grim and deadly earnest, the sceptics of the Italian Renaissance never were

In France, in Germany, in England the same tedious foolery went on as in Italy Latin verses and Sapphic odes, epistles spun of platitudes and commonplaces were profusely exchanged, dedications, prefaces, testimonies of learning in Latin verse and prose, were composed for each other by the members of a mutual admiration society in which every scribbler of sham Latin verses was a 'modern Horace,' and every compiler of a compendium combined 'the elegance of Sallust with the felicity of Livy,' exercises diversified by prolonged controversies conducted for the entertainment of the 'republic of letters' and adorned with the amenities and ponderous *facetiæ* of classical billingsgate, in which each *vir doctissimus* became *asinus ignarus*

But in the northern lands humanism did assume a more serious complexion than in Italy, tending in general to theology It thus became mostly associated with the Reformation initiated by Friar Luther, who denounced in the same elegant terms both Rome and reason—"*Die verfluchte Huhre Vernunft*" In the European world, flooded for the first time with books

by the multiplying press, thought circulated and fermented, and the revival of thought which rapidly superseded the outlook of the ancient world proceeded in spite of the 'revival of learning' and the 'reformation of religion.'

But in the land where it swayed unmodified the products of the humanistic movement were intellectual death and corruption. The blight of mere artificial imitativeness fastened on men's minds, and the Italian intellect never fully recovered from the hollow and false spirit of the Renaissance "This was it which damped the glory of Italian wits, that nothing had been written there now these many years but flattery and fustian."

Torrents of nonsense have been and are still daily gushed forth about the Italian Renaissance. The charm of the period in a land which lay closer to the old springs of culture, that efflorescing brilliancy and pagan opulence of artistic production which still affectionately holds us, were not the fruit of humanism, but of the time when the Italian mind was stimulated by the culture of the Moors and of Provence, when the Italian spirit was stirred to vigorous life in the struggle for freedom against Pope, Emperor and feudal lords. It was the age which produced Dante and Giotto and brought to life Italian art and literature Their resources were deliberately used as a political means of power and diversion by the ambition of the princes who crushed liberty, and the course of their development, which had begun in freedom and vital energy, though borne onward for a short time by the initial impulse, after they had become the creatures of aulic patronage, was one of rapid parabolic decline. Italy has produced no second Dante No Italian poet after him can be named in the same breath. Instead of the *Divine Comedy* the Renaissance produced Sannazaro's *Arcadia*. Not only did the Italian Renaissance produce no Dante, it was absolutely incapable of appreciating him; it set him aside and disparaged him, "banished him," in the words of one of the humanists of the time, "from the assemblies of the learned and made him over to wool-carders and

bakers." Latin was once more restored to the position of literary language and the growth of Italian literature stamped down This had already been the ideal of Petrarch, the father of humanism, who chiefly prided himself on his Latin epic, the *Africa*; and Boccaccio, though infinitely superior to all his successors, shows already in his weakness for Ciceronian 'elegance' in his Italian writing the poisonous imitative spirit which was to kill off so much of native genius, and he apologizes for having written "things in the vulgar tongue fit for the ears of the populace" From that time on, while humanism reigned supreme, Italian literature sinks into mellifluous euphuisms, elegant conceits, and sugary ornateness, till in the seventeenth century it becomes a by-word for hollow bombast and turgid absurdity—"flattery and fustian." Before its final sinking into utter degradation we have, it is true, a Tasso and an Ariosto who charm by the sonorous suavity of the verbal music in which their sensuous fancy is clothed But you may search their pages in vain for a character or a thought And the manner in which their felicitous talent was appreciated by their princely patrons of culture is sufficiently well known. Tasso was cast in prison, and Ariosto's florid adulation was by Cardinal d'Este received with the words, "*Dove diavolo, Messer Lodovico, avete trovate tutte queste corbellerie?*"

Italian painting, which quickly grew in technique through the Lippis and Masaccio, was at its technical height under Raphael already stricken with the canker of mawkish grace and artificial ornateness, and sank with him into rapid degradation and hollow formalism Only in such men as were least tainted with the spirit of the times, in whom something of the proud independence and enthusiasm of an earlier age survived, in Leonardo, Michel-Angelo, and the Venetians, whose mind dwelt outside the current of courtly elegance and modish classicism, was true creative power manifested And their faults were proportionate to the pestilent influence upon them of prevalent taste, from which not even Leonardo or Michel-Angelo could altogether escape

It was indeed a precious revival of 'taste' and

of 'appreciation for antiquity' which inspired its patrons and arbiters, the papal princes, to tear down the venerable historic basilica of St. Peter's, and set Michel-Angelo and Raphael quarrying the sacred remains of the Roman Forum in order to erect them into that pile of overgrown hideousness on the Vatican hill!

Immediately its transmitted impulse was spent the culture of classical humanism resolved itself into its elements, and issued in the basest degradation of literature and art which the world has looked upon—barroque classicism and rococo taste If it has contributed any spark to the fire which lit the new life of Europe, almost everything that is base and false in the ideals and tastes which for nigh three centuries have oppressed it and warped its growth, is likewise to be traced to Renaissance humanism That pestilent pseudo-classic 'elegance' which infested Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, that cold blight which poisoned the literature of France in the critical period of its growth and its influence, so that its men of talent lay palsied for two centuries gibbering about 'Cupid's darts,' the Graces,' 'the Muses,' and 'divine Chloë'; that corruption which degraded the tongue of Villon and Rabelais into that of Vauvenargues and the Hôtel Rambouillet, Elizabethan English into that of Addison and Pope, that deformity of literary ideals which praised Racine and scorned Shakespeare; that baseness and blindness which covered Europe with *perruques allongées*, Wren architecture, 'artificial ruins,' and 'classic' colonnades, with furbelowed Romans striking Raphaelesque attitudes with outspread fingers, and goddesses sprawling on clouds, and of which all that is artistically mean and hideous in the modern world is the outcome; the unspeakable absurdity in notions of polite education which weighs to this day upon the most vital functions of our culture and life—all those things are the legacy of Italian humanism. We owe, if nothing else, to Ruskin that he first boldly exposed the contemptible worthlessness of that Renaissance taste whose tyrannous influence so blinded our

over the sugary counterfeits of Palladio and pass by the genuine glories of Italian Gothic, snatch at the tinsel and cast aside the gold That baseness is but the reflection in art of the imitative artificiality and unreality in which the pedantry of humanism moved, and which utterly extinguished in it every impulse of rational and critical thought

CHAPTER VIII

ELEMENTS OF EUROPE

IN the motley, multifarious world of Europe every form ever assumed by ruling power was represented in its full vigour. A theocratic power more strongly organized than any the East had seen [illegible]ore untransactingly jealous of its claims to control over men's affairs, their lives, their thoughts, seemed at first to tower over all, and aimed in fact at that absolute supremacy which the Church of Hildebrand and Benedict VIII regarded as the logical right of its divine authority Beside it stood the power of the kings The barbaric tribes had originally no kings The style was assumed by the war-lords who led them in their conflicts with Rome and raised their kingdoms on its ruins, in imitation of that of its emperors. The Church sought to set up an actual successor to the Roman emperors of the West, who, as her mandatory and secular arm, should wield temporal power over Christendom But a strong central government was impossible in barbaric Europe The actual temporal rulers were the feudal chiefs, dukes, counts, barons, margraves, or whatever they might call themselves, among whom Europe was parcelled out into domains varying in size from the few acres round their castles to provinces as large as kingdoms; and who, besides the actual possession of the soil, exercised unrestrained arbitrary power over its inhabitants as their villeins and serfs The manner in which barbarism was first broken by commerce with the civilization of Islam, gave rise to a fourth form of power, that of the traders, the power of money. They were enabled to defy other powers, to wring charters from them, to [illegible] Their example was followed every-

where in Europe; towns purchased home-rule for cash from barons rendered penurious by their own devastations, by the crusades, from kings, from emperors. A lively trade was driven in charters, to the intense disgust and indignation of the more powerful nobles and bishops, who cried that the foundations of society were being sapped by those "execrable inventions by which," in the words of Abbot Guibert of Nogent, "contrary to law and justice, slaves withdrew from the obedience which they owed to their masters"

The inevitable result of that multiplicity of rival powers was a series of long and desperate conflicts among them all Popes and emperors, kings and priests, feudal lords and kings, kings and emperors, communes, barons and popes, all promptly flew at one another's throats, covered Europe with pikes and battlements, and filled its annals with battles and blood Europe, though it bled, profited by the quarrels of its masters, all of them got weakened. It was the obvious policy of each to play off its less influential against its stronger rivals Thus the Church set up and consolidated the Lombard communes against the emperors, the emperors and kings set up communes and bishoprics and abbots as a check against the barons, the English barons played off the commons against the kings, and the kings in turn played them off against the barons The moneyed burghers in general profited, and when at last they had so waxed in power as to threaten and defy kings, nobles and priests, they identified themselves with the powerless, and called themselves 'the people'

But the contests and death-grapples of rival power-holders gradually merged into a new situation The policy of combination and alliances among them gradually developed. At first the power of the central government of the kings was extremely small Dukes, counts who were supposed to hold their lands of the king as fiefs, ruled over far larger domains, flouted his authority, and carried on predatory wars with their neighbours on their own account, or joined with foreign invaders, as it suited them But the weaker lords naturally appealed to the king for protection, and more

power gathered round him. It was found that, instead of fighting private wars on one's own account, it was quite as advantageous to lend one's serfs and vassals to fight in the king's wars, and to share the spoils in the form of royal favours and gifts; hence the phrase 'to fight for king and country.' Henry VIII consolidated Tudor despotism by giving his nobles the Church-lands to loot. In France, in Spain the central power gradually grew and extended by marriage-alliances, conquests and purchases; in England it had been unified by the Norman Conquest, Italy was kept fragmented by the Balance of Power maintained by the Pope, and Germany by the power of the elector princes and bishops The Church, having utterly weakened the terrible emperors whom it had so thoughtlessly helped to set up, found it to be to its interest to make common cause and identify itself with all kings The advantage was mutual. The kings received their crowns from priests and became the anointed of God, the representatives of Divine power, sacred persons that could do no wrong, answerable to God only, and the people were taught the duty of submission to the Divine Right of kingly power Even the burghers, after many desperate struggles against other powers, found it advantageous to range themselves on their side, and to make common cause with king and noble and Church In England, "this fastness built by Nature for herself Against infection and the hand of war, This precious stone, set in the silver sea, Which serves it in the office of a wall Against the envy of less happier lands," large armies were unnecessary for defensive purposes, and therefore expensive For the purposes of the king's offensive wars money had constantly to be obtained, and the burghers who held the purse had therefore to be treated with consideration The parliament of embarrassed and open-mouthed burghers which Simon de Montfort, the son of the leader of the Albigensian crusade, had set up against the king, acquired extraordinary importance. England's chief means of aggression, moreover, as well as of defence, lay in a navy rather than in an army; and ships were chiefly the property of the trading class

who, now that Vasco da Gama and Columbus had changed the channels of the world's commerce, served all interests as well as their own, by supplying the Spaniards with slaves and relieving them of gold galleons, and by building empires overseas Thus the trading classes of moneyed burghers rose to great power in England, which accordingly became an exemplar of free institutions to 'less happier lands' The Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century and its developments further transformed the relation of power-holders The power of money, of capital, came to overshadow and render more or less obsolete all other forms of power. Theocratic power, kingly power, landed power, military power, became to a large extent dependent on the power of money But they remained, nevertheless, extremely useful adjuvants to it Military power, for example, would seem amid the enormous sources of power developed by the 'arts of peace' the most obsolete, serving no further purpose Wars, in spite of the popular axioms that 'there have always been wars,' that 'human nature, etc,' which our beatific ignorance is taught to repeat, are a relatively recent invention in the history of mankind 'Human nature' has acquired the habit as a means of acquiring property within the last five thousand years or so, it was unknown to 'human nature' during hundreds of thousands of years, and is still unknown to most primitive races But as a matter of fact militarism was found to be a most important ally of financial power, opening up new markets, feeding vast industries, stimulating patriotism, discipline, obedience, and all sorts of subtly and essentially useful virtues And so of all other forms of power. The upshot of the process of development through which Europe has passed, is that the extraordinarily incongruous medley of rival powers which, in its origin, struggled for mastery, tore one another to pieces, turned Europe into the cockpit of their desperate rivalries and conflicts, have come to be firmly united, bound fast together by a common spirit, common thoughts, and common interests, throne, altar, the sword, the pen, and the guinea, stand

firmly side by side in one huge, indissoluble Holy Alliance

A striking instance of that process is presented by Germany In no part of Europe has the conflict between the various powers been more desperate and more prolonged. The power of the elective emperors was jealously resisted and kept down by the popes; that of the territorial lords and bishops in whom the elective rights were vested inevitably came to overshadow completely that of the nominal ruler. The emperor was destitute of revenues, Charles V's predecessor was known as 'Maximilian the moneyless,' and the great Charles himself was ever at a loss to cope with his penury Every rood of land of the imperial domains eventually passed away in bribes to the Electors. The trading cities of the Hansa threw off all allegiance to emperor or territorial lords. Germany became ultimately fragmented by the incurable separatist tendencies of its conditions, and ruined and devastated by the fierceness of its conflicts It was rent asunder by three different religions Every form of power, that of emperor, priests, barons, and burghers became crippled and exhausted by the perpetual conflicts between them all.

Yet on the eve of Germany's fatal bid for '*Weltmacht oder Niedergang*,' what do we find? All those powers which for centuries had been engaged in a death-struggle against one another are firmly united in the bonds of common ambitions and interests. The Kaiser, representative of the mediæval ideals of Divine Right and empire, is at one with the Junkers, successors of the Teutonic Knights and robber-barons; the financial interests, the Frankfort bankers, the Hamburg shipowners, the industrialists, the Essen steel magnates, representatives of the trading burghers, assisted and promoted by Kaiser and militarists, make the aims and schemes of the latter as much their own as court and camp, even the Vatican is not altogether unsuspected of having a finger in the plot So united have been all forms of modern power in their aims and action, that it becomes a matter of considerable difficulty to disentangle their

respective responsibilities, and to point beyond doubt to the main culprit.

No sooner had the centralized power of kings become sufficiently consolidated in their own domains than they sought to overpower their neighbours and seize theirs To the class wars between orders of power, succeeded the strife amongst the centralized powers themselves England, being, thanks to geography and the Norman Conquest, the first to get consolidated, was accordingly the first to attack its neighbours The inhabitants of France failed at first to perceive any distinction between the aggression of one royal power-system against another and the local wars of duke against duke, and king against duke to which they were accustomed, and they remained as indifferent in the one case as in the other It took nearly a hundred years of English pillage and devastation to rouse them against the nuisance, and for that sentiment to assume the form of patriotism and loyalty to their king No sooner had the English been swept out of France than the French king, confirmed in turn in his power, hastened to follow the example they had set, and to start predatory wars on his own account, attacking Naples and Milan on the pretext of precisely such a title as that of the English king to the crown of France The Pope next bethought himself that he too would like to capture a couple of towns and villages to which he also had a 'title,' albeit a forged one, and set France, the Emperor, Aragon, and the Italian princes route-marching against Venice, and, having secured his loot, suggested that the allies should now turn, for want of better to do, upon France And so the dance went on that never since has ceased. The personal duel to which Francis I challenged the Emperor Charles unfortunately never took place, but they instead fought six wars, devastated Italy, Artois Navarre, and successfully ruined Spain and the Germanic Empire. For a share of the disintegrating corpse of that empire, German and Austrian princes, Dukes of Savoy, Sweden, Denmark, France, scrambled for thirty years, killing two-thirds of its population. The King of France, the chief profiter, continued the plunder by seizing Alsace and Flanders, and laying

out picturesque ruins in the Palatinate The settling of his family in Madrid gave rise to a European war which went on until every one was weary and forgot what it was about, except Marlborough, who protracted it in view of commissions from the army-contractors; it left the map unchanged, and the chief profit to England of her most glorious victories was the monopoly of the slave-trade, which was secured to her by the Asiento Contract. Frenchmen first became acquainted with Russian *moujiks* on the Vistula, because Stanislas Lecszinski was not *persona grata* with the Russian Czar and the Austrian Emperor In order to find an income for her children Elizabeth of Parma, with the help of the gardener's son, Alberoni, kept Europe on tenter-hooks for twelve years Another little family arrangement of the Austrian Emperor Charles VI—for the sake of which he sold the trade of Belgium to England who, in turn, bestowed Serbia on Austria and Greece on Turkey at Passarowitz—started a European war which lasted seven years But the worst evil which the blundering Charles VI inflicted upon Europe was to save the life of Frederick Hohenzollern, who was about to be shot by his father, and whose first act was to attack and rob the daughter of his preserver She refused Sir Thomas Robinson's pressing offer to join England and Prussia against France, and dried her Silesian tears with a share of the loot of Poland The robber of Potsdam, assisted by English subsidies of money and men, ran amuck, and kept Europe well occupied while he created the German Empire, thus enabling his English partner to create the British Empire.

The kings had called themselves 'England,' 'France,' 'Spain,' as our bishops call themselves 'Canterbury,' 'York,' 'Winchester' More recently Jo'burg Jews have been known to call themselves 'England' The issues of those contests corresponded to no human cause or interest, whether 'racial' or 'national' Race, as the term is used and abused, nations, are but the product of the establishment of centralized powers in Europe At the outset, thanks to the œcumenical tradition of the Roman Empire and of the Church, Europe, Christendom, was thought of as a single community;

no portion of it was shut off from the rest, or grew in isolation. Considering the conditions of the early Middle Ages the closeness and extent of intercourse was remarkable, it was relatively closer and more extensive than in our own times Monks from Ireland and England travelled and settled in Germany, France and Italy, Italian priests became archbishops of Canterbury and chancellors of England, and an Englishman became chancellor of Sicily, an Irishman was the friend of the Emperor and studied in Spain, every Englishman who cared about such education as was obtainable went at least as far as the Paris schools, the early universities in Paris, Bologna, Padua, Naples, Montpellier, Vienna, Oxford were divided into 'Nations' of students gathered from every part of Europe, Frenchmen swarmed in England, Spaniards travelled in Germany, Germans in Spain There was the closest constant intercourse between the Norman courts of Winchester, Rouen and Palermo, between the courts of Barcelona and Toulouse, of Carolingian France and Germany, of Naples and Vienna, and between every country and the papal court of Rome or Avignon Merchants spent their lives trudging backwards and forwards from Italy over the Brenner Pass, through Switzerland and along the Rhine to the Hansas and Flanders, and vice versa, postal correspondence was unsatisfactory, so people went themselves Priests, poets, students, and Jews wandered everywhere, pilgrims from Normandy or Ireland went to Rome, to the Holy Land, to the shrines of Southern Italy The population of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries were far greater travellers, considering the different conditions, than those of the age of railways

That early unity only disappeared, and that intercourse and cultural communion became more and more restricted as the various centralized powers became stronger The 'nations' grouped about the consolidated thrones withdrew more and more into themselves. The tendencies, the 'self-determination' of the peoples themselves, whenever they have been able to show them freely, have in general been towards greater unity, and we have had Pan-German, Pan-Slavic, and Pan-Italian movements

Only the sufferings of countries governed as conquered dependencies, such as Poland, Bohemia, Hungary, Ireland, have given rise to separatist tendencies, and to the ideal of setting up house for themselves. European wars took place between power-systems composed of agglomerations for the most part heterogeneous in regard to race, language, and religion; and were largely conducted by means of hired mercenaries, or the troops lent by allied powers Charles VIII and Francis I fought with Swiss and even with Turkish troops, the Burgundian Charles V sacked Rome with Spanish and German troops led by a Frenchmân, the armies of Tilly, Wallenstein, Maximilian, Mansfeld, Christian of Brunswick, Gustavus Adolphus, which well-nigh blotted out civilization from Central Europe, were composed of adventurers from every country, "raised out of the scum of the people by princes who have no dominion over them," as Lord Chichester wrote, who passed as occasion offered from one side to the other, were paid and fed by plunder, and were more dreaded by their 'friends' than by their 'foes' The Prussian army was founded by Frederick William with likely-looking fellows kidnapped by his recruiting officers from Scandinavia to Transylvania, from the Liffey to the Niemen, and of Frederick's armies in the Seven Years' War and at Rossbach, where they defeated a thoroughly German army, not one half were Prussians The Queen of Hungary defended herself with Italian troops, and England garrisoned Gibraltar, Minorca, and India with Germans

The domain of European civilization has been turned into a cockpit for five centuries and more for reasons which not a single group of its inhabitants cared two straws about, or even comprehended The wars of religion are somewhat of a relief in the midst of dynastic wars. Religious fanaticism is at least sincere, it may be deplorable, but by the side of naked greed it is respectable But, as a matter of fact, the wars of religion were so inextricably mixed with purely political motives, that the religious fervour of the few was but a tool of the intrigues and scrambles of rulers for possession and power The Protestant Hollanders called the Catholic French under

the Duke of Anjou to their aid against Alexander Färnese. In the ghastly Thirty Years' War "there is no trace," Gardiner justly sums up, "of mutual hostility between the populations of the Catholic and Protestant districts apart from their rulers." French soldiers whose fathers had massacred the Huguenots and whose brothers were engaged in putting them down, were sent by a Cardinal to support the Lutherans against the Catholic emperor

What is called the 'Political History' of Europe is not edifying The Marquise du Châtelet said that "she could not overcome the disgust with which all modern history since the fall of the Roman Empire inspired her"

In Greek history, though after the epic of the Persian repulse it may seem to be taken up with the petty parochial politics, personalities, and protracted brawls of two or three neighbouring villages, we see the play of every contingency in the medium of the Greek mind, in the exceptional light of that clear, free thought, without disguise or distortion, so that those parochialities, and personalities, and village feuds assume the aspect of general questions, and open out into universal thought, and every trifling and trivial detail becomes precious, and its local dimensions are lost in bearings and interests that are wide as humanity Even at its very worst and basest, when we come upon the crudest greeds and ugliest instincts, as in the discussion in the Athenian ecclesia on the fate of Mytilene, or in what is known as the Melian dialogue in Thucydides, the arguments are brutally cynical, but they are not *lies*, they are not attempts to turn black into white, to persuade into a state of self-righteousness, to circumvent the mind in diplomatic verbiage, in hypocrisy, to disguise and falsify thoughts. We are not dealing with false values, but with human facts In the history of Rome we are ultimately dealing with the most selfish motives of sordid greed. But the exploitation of mankind as the Romans understood it, entailed the task of organizing mankind; and their mind was from the first penetrated with the principle

that the only means by which mankind can be organized is by fairness, equity, justice.

But the conflict of cupidities in the barbarian-born world of Europe is uninformed by thought and unrelieved by its organizing power. Its baseness is, on the contrary, made more vile by the abhorrent disguise of simulated virtue, by the travesty of every purpose and every motive in the hypocrisy of self-righteous and fulsome idealism. Reared under the dominance of theocratic power-thought which, however sincere, must needs clothe all its aims in the terms of its ethical and spiritual conventions, European society has from the first been trained to give to every act and purpose the garb of moral self-righteousness. Priests, often mere barbarians raised to ecclesiastical offices by kings and dukes, were the first ministers and diplomatists of European States. To them fell the task of translating into beseeming and unctuous language the unscrupulous lusts and shameless treacheries of barbarian chieftains. Dissimulation and perjury were the ordinary adjuvants of force. The traditions of European statecraft grew up in an atmosphere of perfidy and sanctimony. Of those arts of statecraft and diplomacy, the Roman court came to be the recognized mistress and model. The task of keeping the petty Italian principalities divided among themselves, of warding off powerful influences from the peninsula, of maintaining 'the Balance of Power,' in order to safeguard the couple of provinces which the Popes claimed as their temporal domain, developed craft, intrigue and deceit into a fine art which became the atmosphere of Italian political thought and its absorbing study and interest in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The name of Machiavelli has come to be indissolubly linked with that political rascality and unscrupulous fraudulence, and he is, rather unjustly, branded as the originator of pernicious doctrines of systematic depravity. But the *Prince* is nothing more than a simple exposition of the ordinary accepted principles of political action in the Italy of his day. The industrious Florentine secretary would probably have been

greatly astonished at being regarded as the theorist of political perversity on the score of the journalistic task he had undertaken of setting down the current approved maxims of government All European powers have, like Frederick of Prussia, loudly disowned and denounced as their scapegoat Machiavellian principles, and sedulously practised them Italian statecraft became the admired model of governments The heart of Louis XI so melted with tender admiration for Francesco Sforza, the perfection of political rascality, that he refrained from robbing him Thomas Cromwell prided himself, in carrying out the policies of Wolsey and Henry VIII, on his Italian training, and carried the *Prince* in his wallet Women naturally became the competitors of princes and prelates in the arts of mendacity , Louise of Savoy and Margaret of Austria showed at Cambrai equal to any envoy in the arts of haggling and overreaching. Catherine de Medici, to whose grandfather Machiavelli had dedicated his manual, Mary Stuart, the pupil of the Guises, were only surpassed by Elizabeth in the tortuosities of deceit on which the latter so highly plumed herself The intricacies of crooked schemes, plots, intrigues, and machinations were to such a degree the habitual means of political action that rulers became actually blind whenever an obvious and straight means of achieving their ends presented itself When, by the death of Charles the Bold, the chief prize which the King of France had for years schemed to obtain was ready to drop into his mouth, he lost Burgundy because the means of obtaining it were so obvious that he devised instead circuitous machinations In the same manner, as Bismarck declared, the most assured and insidious means of dissimulation was to speak the truth Historians have long conceived it to be their chief function and endeavour to penetrate through the manifold palimpsest of ostensible pretexts and intricate mendacities to the actual purpose which the chief actors on the stage of history had in view

Thus have the traditions of European diplomacy and politics been formed, that *haute diplomatie*, those sapient webs of combinations and intrigues, that polished and

punctilious fraudulence, those cat's-paw schemes and over-reaching mystifications, the felicitous phrasing of 'formulas' that enable unavowable vileness to utter itself in words, and convenient crime and cool atrocity to be glossed over with simulated rectitude, that decorous rascality that stinks in the grand manner, those oblique and secret transactions of pilfering designers in which the destinies of mankind are played away with loaded dice —thus hitherto has the government of the human race been constituted In the year 1648 the Power-States of anarchic Europe, exhausted, depopulated, ruined, fatigued and unnerved by thirty years of the most devastating of wars, sent their delegates to the first European Peace Conference at Munster and Osnabruck, that some 'settlement' might be effected. But even in the extremity of universal need and suffering the dominant anxiety of great and small was not at all to 'settle' anything, but to scramble for loot, for Naboth's vineyards, for 'satisfactions,' 'compensations,' 'indemnities,' and to seek increase and profit out of the misery of humanity.

Divested of those decent veils with which its nakedness is customarily disguised by the reflections of power-thought, the purview of European history appears to be conducive to a Yahoo view of humanity It may not unnaturally be asked, 'If the elements of the modern world are so much baser than those of the civilization it supplanted, what then becomes of our law of human progress?'

There is, as a matter of fact, no aspect of history which more brightly illuminates that law in all its splendour. The truly sublime fact is that through all that nameless slough of mire and sordidness there runs a trail of growing light, a sight of the stars It is no ambiguous and debatable value sentimentally interpreted into questionable history, but the precious adamantine core of life that lies indestructible under all friable incrustations of murk and clay. Not only has that European world been the medium of human evolution,

but the phase of that evolution which has issued thence has transcended every foregoing phase. What neither the free power of Greek thought nor the organizing skill and ideals of Rome did, or could accomplish, has been compassed by modern Europe The powers of development and control of which individual man disposes have not only been infinitely extended, but the task of their adjustment in the organism of humanity has been advanced as never before. If our world stands to-day quivering in anxiety and bewilderment before the issues that confront it, that very distress and those doubts are the signs of accomplished evolution, and those issues and the potentialities out of which they arise are such as would to any previous age, could it have so much as conceived them, have seemed the distant problems of utopic speculation

The phenomenon of that marvellous development is wholly the outcome of the operation of rational thought The manner in which that operation has taken place will, I trust, become clearer in the following pages Before considering it, we must, however, first note some of the characters of the development of thought in modern Europe

Like its social state, the culture of Europe is a medley of the most disparate and incongruous ingredients If our intellectual world is so sharply divided into a number of separate realms of thought, a theological, a literary, or rather three or four separate literary spheres, philosophy, science, that is not, as might be assumed, a natural division of the spheres of intellect grounded in the nature of things, nor is it merely the expression of a convenient division of labour due to the vastness of present knowledge It is, on the contrary, a curious and peculiar anomaly due to historical causes, to the circumstances in which the intellectual development of Europe has taken place Religion, literature, poetry, metaphysics, science, are not in the nature of things separate realms of thought, having incompatible standards and values and moods, there is but one order of standards and values of thought

In no other culture have those sharp divisions existed. The oriental priest, the Greek philosopher, the lover of wisdom, regarded all knowledge and all art as their province, like them the Muslim sages were universalists and joined the cultivation of astronomy to that of poetry, of metaphysics to that of medicine and music. Whether such universalism is now either needful or possible is not the point. It is impossible, not so much because of the expansion of our *omne scibile*, but rather because we have practically three or four totally separate cultures coexisting side by side, but in their essence alien, unrelated, immiscible, differing not in their scope alone, but in their standards and outlooks, influencing each other, but only as might the cultures of different civilizations, cultures which have grown along separate lines without mixing, almost without meeting. We have the vestige of the theocratic thought which once controlled all thought, standing apart from every other realm of the human mind, from historical thought, from metaphysics, from science, from the currents of educated thought, surviving in another universe We have an academic world the offspring of Renaissance humanism, beatifically repeating its formulas, living amid its own peculiar likes and dislikes, and controlling what we are pleased to term education, helping to keep secret the fact that the world has moved since the fifteenth century We have somewhere or other a philosophical world, whose function should be to unify all thought and mould and guard its unity, but which, owing to its unfortunate development partly at the breast of theology, partly in desperate conflict with it, has proved wholly abortive, a miserable misbirth, whose existence is not certainly known in the living world We have a world of science that has grown in solitary seclusion and isolation from all other culture, despised and abused, which has only compassed toleration and some measure of influence through the circumstance that, as a by-product of its activities, it has acted as the jinnee-slave which has transformed the material world, and it has continued on the whole secluded, silent and alien to surrounding thought We have a vast, billowing flood

of popular literature, ephemeral press, fiction, pamphlets and clap-trap, a literature which might be termed the Literature of Ignorance, whose first object is to get itself printed and sold, which lives accordingly by tickling and pandering, and represents the mentality of the multitude whose intellectual pabulum it provides That condition of our European culture with its water-tight compartments, its theology ignoring philosophy and science and literature , its abortive philosophy ignorant of science , its science ignorant of philosophy and despising literature , its educational literature ignorant of everything save Greek syntax and 'the wisdom of the ancients ' , its general literature ignorant of all else save the arts of the pimp and the pander—that, I say, is not at all a natural state of things but an abnormality, indeed a monstrous deformity of our existing intellectual development

If intermixture, variety, diversity of cultures and ideas are beneficial and necessary, they are only so to the full on condition that they become truly intermixed, unified, assimilated into an harmonious whole Greek assimilation of all previous civilization was only so masterfully successful because it absorbed and assimilated them into a wonderfully homogeneous unity, filtered through its critical attitude, stamped with the impress of its own logical spirit Our civilization, our intellectual culture, rich as it is from the multitude of its component elements and the variety of its experience, suffers profoundly from the fundamental accident that those elements have remained in a large measure unblended and ununified Our culture, our cultures, I should say, are unassimilated, undigested. Our civilization has hence remained in its structure heterogeneous, unbalanced, disorderly, unequal, lacking equilibrium to such an extent that its elements and principles are constantly toppling down over one another in the confusion of inconsistency

At the outset, as we saw, the world of theological thought was supreme The Scriptures, or the Fathers were the sole admissible source of ideas, of thought, of knowledge The attitude of the European mind was that ascribed to 'Amr in the doubtful anecdote of the destruction of the Alexandrian library "That

knowledge which is already contained in the Kurân is superfluous, that which conflicts with it is false." From that fatal situation Europe has been saved by the power of the secular civilization of Greece and Rome. The exclusion of secular thought could not be maintained against that influence, secular thought, often in conflict with, often crippled by theological thought, could not be kept out, it made the development of Europe possible

But that development, in its mental aspect, differed totally from that of the ancient world Secularism did not supplant the original theocratic thought, but grew alongside it in strained adaptation and conflict An entirely new element, moreover, entered the European mind, setting a difference between it and all previous thought

With the effects of that new element, quite foreign to classical culture—the scientific spirit—we are, in their grosser aspects, tritely familiar The expansion by its means of European civilization to the four quarters of the globe, the complete transformation of its material aspects, the rise of industrialism, the consequent redistribution of all powers, the multiplication of the means of intercommunication and the ensuing dissemination of thought, are results as commonplace in their obviousness as they are gigantic in their significance Scarcely less so is the transformation by science of man's ideas, the revelation of the universe and of man's and his world's place within it, the conceptions of natural law, of the conservation of energy, of evolution, which have transmuted the outlooks of the human mind, and sapped, as no other power could, the foundations of all power-thought and authority

But the action of that new influence cuts even deeper and more subtly into the very nature of the European mind and of its growth When experimental research, the investigation of nature by the observation of details and exact measurement, when mathematical analysis, and also scholastic disputation fine-spun on the web of Aristotelian dialectic, began, at the very dawn of its awakening from the night of the dark centuries, to

occupy the mind of Europe, a new form, a new turn was given to it which radically distinguished it from the mentality of the Græco-Roman world

The nature of that difference in the character of human thought is perhaps best illustrated by reference to, the highest and more subtle forms of its activity, to the conceptions of philosophical thought With the Greeks philosophical thought, founding itself on a very slender and perfunctory analysis and investigation of experience, aimed primarily and directly at an interpretation of the world, at the construction of a complete and harmonious conception of the universe that should furnish a rounded-off outlook satisfying in the symmetry of its finished outline The refinements of logical and dialectical thought had for their object to secure and test that harmony and consistency of the various parts of such a system with one another, a task which was performed by the thinkers of Greece with an acuteness which has forestalled almost every subsequent path of thought During the Middle Ages any such attempt at interpretation of the world was, of course, precluded by the veto of dogma Scholastic thought, confined within the limits of that postulated interpretation, employed itself with the discussion of separate aspects and questions, which, owing to the large infusion of Hellenistic and Neoplatonic doctrine in the Christian theology, offered ample scope for such exercise, it considered also the criterion of authority upon which those various aspects and parts of dogma rested

The first thinker who in the new Europe answers to the appellation of philosopher, René Descartes, was an ardent student of the new world and methods of science which were just then disengaging themselves from the husks of Aristotelianism in the Paduan school, an original investigator in anatomy and physiology, an expert mathematician whose progress in analytical geometry led the way from the tentative efforts of Kepler and Cavalieri to the calculus of Leibnitz and Newton, and so deeply interested in the Copernican doctrine that he had written a work upon the subject which he,

however, destroyed in dismay on hearing of the impeachment of Galilei The way in which the tasks of philosophical thought presented themselves to the first European philosopher at once marks the deep-set, radical contrast between modern and Greek thought 'On coming to examine the various things which I had been taught and supposed I knew,' Descartes said, 'I found that, in truth, I could not be said to know any of them, that my information and my views had been taken on trust and that I had no guarantee of their accuracy and validity Finding that no single item of my supposed knowledge could stand the test of critical examination, I resolved to reject and discard it altogether, and to start again from the beginning to endeavour to discover what things I could regard as really known I decided, therefore, not to accept any truth whatsoever unless I had thoroughly satisfied myself of its validity, and saw it beyond doubt quite clearly and distinctly' That conception of the task of philosophical thought differs completely from that of the ancients No longer to build up a rounded and complete system of the universe presenting at all cost a purview of harmonious contemplation, was the object of the thinker, but to assure himself of the validity, of the legitimate nature of whatever knowledge he, in the process of thought, was called upon to use, to test the value of his currency, to cast aside all such coins of the mind as did not give the sterling ring of solid worth, not to be constructive but critical That in the development of his thoughts Descartes fell far short of the rules and principles he had set himself, is of no essential relevance Of immeasurably greater importance even than any products and results of thought is the desire that animates it, its aim, its method Always and everywhere it is not between Truth and Error in the fruits of thought that the essential conflict, the significant contrast lies, but between the truth and error in the aim of thought, in the nature of its sanctions and validities

The aim of philosophical activity, then, with Descartes and with the European thinkers, Locke, Berkeley,

Hume, Kant, who succeed him, is no longer, as with the ancients, satisfying harmony, beauty, interpretative completeness, but *accuracy* of thought The function of philosophy is not to construct, but to test

Philosophy, metaphysics are, we have made up our minds to consider, remote and detached backwaters of the human world It is hardly to those dusty volumes on the top shelves that the throbbing life, the excitements and events, the political, the social developments of Europe are to be traced In what measure the vogue of Cartesian philosophy, the academic enthusiasms and controversies of Dutch universities, of Paris and Oxford, the gushing dilettantism of fine gentlemen and fine ladies, of my lord van Zuitlichen, of Elizabeth, Princess Palatine, or Queen Christina of Sweden have had any bearing on the world's course, in what measure all philosophical ideas percolating downwards through all the strata of thought, may tinge and perfuse even the thought of the street to which philosophy and philosophers are unheard-of exotics, it is not needful to discuss here Philosophical thought, if it is not the source and guide, philosophers, if they are not the leaders, are at least, like all else, the expression and the product of the times, the index of their moods and characters

What has been illustrated by reference to philosophic thought is distinctive of all European as contrasted with foregoing thought The conditions in which it has formed and developed have stamped upon it that critical, questioning, testing character which has marked every tendency of its growth and expansion From its dogmatic cradle where only the relative authority of authorities was in dispute, through the various stages of its liberation from authority, of its secularization, to the growing challenge it casts, as secular thought, to all sanctions, the progressive accentuation of that critical attitude is evinced Follow and compare, for instance, in one train of thought the attitude of mind in, say, Augustine or Aquinas with that of Hooker, and that again with what it has become in Hobbes, and from Hobbes to Montesquieu, from

Montesquieu to Mill or Bentham, and from them to the same train of thought as it presents itself to-day. What successive metamorphic changes in the character of thought, no less startling than any transmutation of species! Throughout the modern period the spirit that manifests itself in whatsoever sphere of mental attitude is the same. Ultimately it proceeds towards a challenge to every existing fact and estimate to justify itself on rational grounds. By degrees every consecrated opinion, every theory, every foregone judgment, every venerable institution is brought to question. The tabu of traditional, inviolable, unquestionable and unquestioned sacredness and 'taking for granted' has been ruthlessly torn from every established power, institution, opinion and conception. 'Upon what title does this thing rest, that power stand? Upon what sanction is that fact assumed, that belief held, that custom acknowledged, that notion accepted, that claim advanced, that estimate founded? If it can give an account of itself, in clear terms of reason, well and good. But if it can put forward no better title than venerable antiquity, established use and wont, ancient tradition, hitherto undisputed acceptance and sanctity, it has no claim to our deference. Immemorial recognition constitutes in itself no title. Can it justify itself rationally to-day? Would we on apprehensible rational grounds accept the estimate to-day, would we choose that as the best possible way of managing the matter, or could we devise a better? If the thing is rationally acceptable, it matters not whether it be new or old, if it be *not* rationally acceptable its age and origin likewise are irrelevant. Mere custom, mere undisturbed reputation of inviolable sanctity, have nothing to do with the case, constitute no claim, no title, and no sanction.' Such is the spirit in which the modern age has faced the order of established things in the human world, whether astronomical views or religious opinions, political institutions or moral estimates, thoughts or things, theories or privileges. Step by step it has thrown its challenge to every assumption however old, immemorially consecrated, however axiomatically accepted. The scope

of the critical process has extended from century to century and from decade to decade, that which remained tabu to the iconoclastic examination of the seventeenth century was traduced before the tribunal of the eighteenth, that which was indulgently taken for granted by the criticism of the eighteenth century was impeached by the nineteenth, until there is not a principle or a human fact, however deeply rooted in the very constitution of the race, or hedged with the halo of immemorial inviolability that is not to-day dragged before the bar of free inquiry, examination and discussion

In what manner European development has, in its structure and inmost worth, been determined by that character of thought, it will be the purpose of the following chapters to elucidate

PART III

EVOLUTION OF MORAL ORDER

CHAPTER I

MORAL LAW AS 'LAW OF NATURE'

I

MEANING OF THE SUPREMACY OF ETHICS

THAT the world of material wonder which the one-time troglodyte has built him, that his mansions of knowledge and stately pleasure-houses of art and ease, are conquests of the cunning quality of his mind's power, is manifest beyond serious doubt or dispute But all those things, the material side of human progress, the improvements in life's resources and comforts, industry, commerce, arts, culture, intellectual growth, are, many will be prompt to exclaim, but husks and externals They constitute indeed the vaunted triumphs of 'civilization,' of 'progress', but precisely on that account there are those who scoff at those conceptions as hollow delusions Humanity does not necessarily stand upon a higher plane of being when riding above the clouds, nor does a hundred miles an hour constitute progress ; man is not even intrinsically transformed by being able to weigh the stars and disport his mind over wider spheres of knowledge There is a deeper aspect of human affairs There is something which stands nearer to the essence of human worth than any form of material or intellectual power, than the control of nature or the development of the mind's insight Power, civilization, culture count for nought if they are associated with moral evil The real standard by which the worth of the human world is to be truly computed is a moral standard It is in an ethical sense that the word 'good' bears its essential meaning when applied to things human, and no process of human evolution can be counted real which is not above all an evolution in 'goodness'

in Scotland were legally in the position of predial slaves; the cockpit and the prize-ring offered to English gentlemen their daily amusement, the English government under the elder Pitt issued letters of marque to privateers to plunder the shipping of Holland while it was at peace with that country On the Continent the state of things was even worse, the feudal system and all its abuses were in force, the rack and the boot were at work in Paris, *lettres de cachet* were issued, every product of independent thought was visited upon its author with persecution, the galleys were full, the Inquisition sat in Spain, and *autos-da-fé* were still alight

Those revolting conditions, which we have so completely outgrown that we are no longer able to conceive them distinctly, were those of comparatively recent times, and they stand, I say, in far more complete contrast with the conditions of civilized European countries to-day, than does a modern express train to the stage-coaches in which our grandfathers journeyed And that enormous ethical development has gone hand in hand with the decay of all the influences which have been credited with fostering the moral sense, and with the operation of all the critical and rational forces which have been supposed to be unfavourable to its high development. But in truth that moral progress is connected with the critical attitude of the modern age, not accidentally and circumstantially, but as directly as are its scientific discoveries and its mechanical achievements Both changes, the material change and the moral change, are the effects of the same cause The abolition of the horrors of feudalism, the abolition of gross iniquity and inhumanity, are as much results of the critical attitude of rationalism as is the abolition of the Ptolemaic system or that of the degeneration theory That intolerance of abuse and wrong, that imperative insistence upon justice and humanity which place the present age, from a moral standpoint, above all its predecessors, are the direct products of the same intellectual processes which have given us the steam-engine and the dynamo

task necessarily imposed upon man by the conditions of his evolution is the creation of a new organism, that of humanity, that the development of his individual powers can only take place in relation to that larger organism, that it is rigorously conditioned by that necessity and must, as an indispensable pre-requisite, be adjusted to it, that by that task, in its difficulty and magnitude, all other issues of human development are overshadowed.

The making of humanity! that is the burden of man's evolution. And that is the solid, nay, somewhat hard fact, of which the 'moral law' is the vaguely conscious expression. It is no throbbing impulse of altruism, no inspiration of generosity for its own sake, but a heavy weight of necessity laid upon man's development by the unbending conditions that govern it. And the supremacy, the paramount character of morality corresponds to the overshadowing magnitude of the evolutionary task which it expresses, and of the difficulties that beset it. The questions and problems comprised under the terms 'ethics' and 'morality' are no other than the problems arising from that task. The necessity of ethical considerations is no other than the hard necessity of adaptation to facts as they are. There are in the relations between man and man conditions which are, and others which are not adapted to actual facts. The unadapted result in failure, the adapted in evolutionary growth and life.

Man by the law of his development seeks power over his fellows. But now the peculiar human situation arises. The exploited competitor is a fellow-man, an element in the human world. The inevitable consequence of that situation is that the condition of the exploited reacts upon the exploiter himself. The exploiter can only wield power over his competitor at the expense of his own evolutionary power and of that of the race.

The necessary concomitant of power exercised by man over man is power-thought, and nowhere is the falsification of power-thought more profound than in the sphere of ethical values. The most important

product of power-thought consists precisely in false values, in false ethical systems. Man's world is thereby falsified in regard to the most essential and vital aspects of his evolution. That evolution is inevitably vitiated at its very source

In the case of the individual himself the nemesis is unfortunately not strikingly and immediately conspicuous. It is no less real, because his whole development, his ideals, his values are falsified and debased, they cannot be the full quality of life's highest values. But that real life does not exhibit the ideal retribution, the poetic justice which was once the commonplace of dramatist and novelist, that wickedness is not punished, nor virtue rewarded, that, on the contrary, injustice, fraud, oppression do commonly triumph in exultant enjoyment of the fruits of their assault upon right, and that right goes unrighted to the end, has become in turn a platitude What really happens is that the phase of society, the order of things in which disregard of right is habitual and accepted, inevitably deteriorates and perishes However much the individual may temporarily benefit by iniquity, the social organism of which he is a part, and the very class which enjoys the fruits of that iniquity, suffer inevitable deterioration through its operation They are unadapted to the facts of their environment The wages of sin is death, by the inevitable operation of natural selection

The ineludible fact is that recognition of the real conditions of his environment and conformity with them is the sole means of development and of real power of which man disposes If he chooses to set aside the powers and conditions of human evolution, and to rely instead upon force and false doctrine, upon bludgeons, and intellectual and moral chloroform, the result must correspond to the means—it is not evolution, it is not development of human power, it is not progress If he abdicates the only means of human power and adopts those of brute power, his progress is not towards human power, but backwards towards brutality.

Nietzsche, having perceived the invalidity and anarchy of current ethical notions, concluded that the

only principle having any real basis in natural facts is the exercise and development of human power That is quite true; all human evolution is the development of man's powers of control over the conditions of his life. But the peculiarity arising out of those conditions is this from the moment that the 'will to power' of the individual seeks to realize itself at the expense and to the detriment of others, it defeats the very object for which it strives All the enormous power which humanity has developed and created has been attained by checking the encroachments of individual power, all the encroachments of individual power in the history of mankind have had the effect of checking the actual development of human power The power of the average man to-day is absolutely and beyond all comparison greater than the power of Alexander the Great, of Cæsar, even of Napoleon He has actually more material, intellectual, and spiritual forces at his command and under his control than the 'masters of the world' in bygone days His life can in every sense, except that of actual despotic domination over his fellows, be a fuller, richer, and more powerful life, and he can, in point of fact, obtain very much more effective service from his fellows than it was ever in the power of any despot to obtain And that prodigious increase in power has been obtained precisely at the expense of the old power of individual domination In proportion as that futile and sterile power has been abridged and rendered impossible, the real substantial power of individual man has increased A world of masters perfectly and completely dominating a multitude of slaves would be a world of complete stagnation, shorn of the power of evolution, fatally and utterly emasculated It would lead, as I have said, not towards Superman, but towards Caliban man If such a world had been completely realized in the Stone Age, the result would be that we should still be in the Stone Age. The advantage to the 'masters' would be somewhat questionable If in the early sixteenth century the pupils of Machiavelli had succeeded in permanently establishing their power on Nietzschean principles, we

should be still in the early sixteenth century; or rather we should be in the condition in which Spain was under Carlos II as a result of the perfectly 'successful' application of those principles, when it was the proud boast of her rulers that there was not a single heretic or a single disloyal person in the realm, when in the midst of a desolate and depopulated country, sunk to the lowest depths of abject misery and degradation which any land once civilized has ever touched, the imbecile king himself was unable to obtain a sufficiency of food Such are the ultimate fruits of power

The moral law is a law of nature Like every other law governing living organisms, it is a condition of adaptation to facts Unlike a physical law, it can be transgressed, but it is transgressed only at the peril of the race, at the sacrifice of its most intimate and vital interests, at the sacrifice of its evolution. Justice is the condition of human adaptation to the facts of human life It is not merely a demand of self-interest, a cry of the weak for protection, it is the call of the paramount interests of the race, it is an expression of that spirit, of that agency which actuates its evolution. And it is as much a rational aim, that is, one corresponding to the demands of existing facts, as is that of any human device for the better control of the conditions of existence

II

MORAL AND MATERIAL PROGRESS

With the notion of an innate moral sense and categorical imperative went the incredible delusion that no essential progress has taken place in the moral sphere,

that the principles of right and wrong became obvious long ago, and have remained immutable That delusion is due in part to the circumstance that moral injunctions are indefinitely elastic As long as there have been any moral notions at all, some such law has been recognized as 'One ought to be good', and it might be alleged that nothing essential has ever been added to it But within the terms of such a sentiment is, of course, included every possible type of ethical standard from that of the primitive Hebrew and the Thug, to that of Plato and of modern man, and the worst atrocities which the world has seen have been committed by men who were intent on being 'good' The moral principle that it is wrong to commit murder is doubtless very old But in early Judæa to sacrifice the first-born was not murder, in the seventeenth century 'not to suffer a witch to live' was not murder, in the twentieth century war is not murder The moral precept that it is wrong to steal is ancient, but it has always been held glorious for military states to steal from one another, and right and proper for every powerful class to steal from those below it, and doubt still exists in the minds of some as to whether the present social order is not founded on legalized theft Every ethical principle has been held at first to be applicable and valid only within a certain restricted sphere, while in other cases its direct contravention has been regarded as not only permissible, but right and laudable, just as the virtue of religious toleration, when first discovered, was as a matter of course assumed to be wholly inapplicable to non-Christians Abstract precepts are of very little significance in the ethical history of mankind, it is their concrete interpretation which has varied The mere utterance and iteration of moral platitudes is almost entirely irrelevant as an index or factor of moral evolution People uttered the same unctuous moralities in the thirteenth century as they do to-day, and were quite as blind to the actual enormities around them as dealers in copy-book maxims are to-day to the patent immoralities which stare them in the face Facts, not fine maxims, are the measure

of moral evolution. Principles are of significance only when they are new, when they are genuine moral discoveries traversing the current and accepted codes, and therefore representing a real mental awakening.

Justice has been preached in the name of tyranny, liberty in that of oppression, and men holding the Gospel in one hand have with the other put Europe to the sword, just as theologians have been known to express dissatisfaction with the conclusiveness of mathematical reasoning, and Italian priests to condemn superstition Moralists have done comparatively little for morality Its progress has been promoted by quite other agencies, unconnected in appearance and in name with professed morality Morality has been thought to remain stationary because whenever it has advanced it has been called by some other name

Moral ideas and morality, it is to-day pretty generally recognized, show change and advance, are aspects of evolution and of progress in at least the same degree as material development, intellectual progress, knowledge, or any other face of human growth. But, while it may without difficulty be admitted that other aspects of progress are the result of rational thought, that view will be pronounced preposterous when applied to moral evolution It is, on the contrary, commonly held that moral excellence is totally distinct in its nature and in its sources from any form of intellectual development It is assumed as an axiom that the two things, moral excellence and intellectual development, are wholly unrelated, that the one can develop independently of the other, that a society may be rich in the products of the intellect and poor in morality, or rude in point of civilization and culture and exalted from the point of view of ethics, that there exists no direct connection between the two orders of qualities There is even a widely diffused notion that they are directly antagonistic, that moral excellence goes with a lowly intellectual state, that high culture and intellectual development corrupt it, that advanced civilization is generally unfavourable

to it, and that it is chiefly to be found in the poor in mind, and in simple, primitive and unsophisticated phases of society.

Those views are, I maintain, utterly erroneous Ethical development, like every other aspect of human progress, not only goes hand in hand with the growth and diffusion of rational thought, but is the direct outcome of it.

The fact too glaring to be ignored or effectively disputed that during the modern age, in spite of the continuous decay of every commonly accepted sanction of morality, the sensitiveness of moral judgment has at the same time grown keener than ever before, has proved disconcerting to the upholders of those long current theories upon which whole systems of thought have been based Marked by an unprecedented growth of rational thought, by the strenuous extension of the critical spirit to every sphere, by the boldness with which every categorical assumption has been challenged, the last three centuries have witnessed the continuous growth of scepticism, not merely in regard to the dogmas of religions, but also in regard to all things which fail to furnish a clear rational account of themselves To-day not only are dogmatic faiths in a state of dissolution, but every traditional sanction and standard of morality is being subjected to the most unsparing criticism Confusion, doubt, and indecision reign wherever direct denial does not altogether repudiate the old foundations and norms of moral conduct And yet, in spite of the uncertainty attaching to all phases of transition, there never was, not by many degrees, an age so moral, in the fullest and truest sense of the term, as the present Whatever indictment can be brought against it, it is certain that the appeal of sentiments of justice, fairness, humanity, has never been so powerful and so general. Never was sensitiveness to wrong, oppression, injustice, so keen , never was the conscience of society wherever suffering, evil, abuse exist so lively and susceptible. Injustice, abuses, crime, and vice, exist to-day as they have done in former ages, but never have they stood

so universally arraigned and condemned at the bar of public opinion. The claims of right and righteousness, of high and earnest standards of life and conduct, have never been, even in the most puritanical communities, so strongly felt. All existing evil, however gross, is conscious as it never was before of the force of reprobating moral opinion. Even the strongest promptings of individual and class interest dare not openly profess indifference to any form of oppression, suffering and dissoluteness.

And more truly and more clearly than in any sentiment or opinion, the ethical development of the age is manifested in the concrete facts of human relations. We frequently contrast the material marvels of our present civilization, our network of railways and swift steamships, our telegraphs and ethergraphs, our electric light and power, our automobiles and aeroplanes, the abolishing of distance, the wonders of industry, the contrivances and comforts of our daily life, with the material civilization of Europe, say, a hundred and fifty years ago. But the contrast between the greatest marvels of modern machinery, and the lumbering conveyances, the guttering candles, the filthy streets, the distaffs and looms, the crude hand implements of the eighteenth century, is not so great as that between the common notions and practices of justice and humanity at the present day and those which obtained in Europe even at that not very distant period. The slave-trade was in full swing; hundreds of slave-ships sailed from Liverpool, petty larceners were sold to the American colonies at five shillings a head; public executions at Tyburn, the victims often being women convicted of shoplifting, offered frequent occasions for popular festivities, publishers of heretical books were placed in the pillory at Charing Cross, at Temple Bar, at the Royal Exchange, and were handed over to the populace to be pelted and stoned, press-gangs scoured the country, men were seized in the street, in their homes, at their weddings, and sent in chains to the King's or the India Company's navy, women and children worked half-naked in coalmines, coalminers and salt-workers

The customary traditional grounds from which such a judgment proceeds may be more than disputable. The judgment itself is, strange to say, correct. The ethical criterion is supreme. It stands as the measure of human development and its achievements paramount over all other values.

Our confidence and assurance in the foundations of our moral judgments are nowadays sorely shaken. The 'categorical imperative' no longer carries conviction We look round in vain for some solid peg of fact whereon to hang those colossally sanctified ideas of right, of righteousness . In 'nature' we seem to see none, nature is cruel and cold, "the gods," as Heracleitos long ago used to say, "are beyond good and evil" In the whole universe no trace of this colossal thing, this supreme morality, is discernible, look as we may we can discover among the laws of nature no trace of this 'moral law' Only in the traditions of men can we find it, uncertainly formulated, variously re-edited according to time and latitude It is, we are driven to conclude, but a man-made convention, not a law of nature, and something sacrosanct and wonderful, but at most a police by-law, as 'sacred' and no more as yonder notice that warns us that 'Trespassers will be prosecuted'

How comes it, then, to have usurped such an outrageously large place in human thought, in human life? For many illegitimate reasons, doubtless But also and above all for a very legitimate and real reason That 'moral law' *is*, in fact, after all, a law of nature That 'supremacy of ethics' *does* correspond in truth to a very real and supremely important fact in human development

And that fact is the one which we have already noted that the peculiar means and conditions of human development necessitate that that development shall take place not by way of individuals, but by way of the entire human race, that the grade of evolution of each individual is the resultant of that œcumenical development, that the race alone is the bearer of the hereditary transmission of the products of that evolution, that the

III

POWER AND JUSTICE

The ethical spirit of the modern age, it must be noted, is above all characterized by the ideas of justice, fairness, fair-play, rather than by those of abnegation, self-sacrifice, and emotional sentiments, which marked the morality of religious periods

Now in the first place, the practice and attitude of justice is essentially a matter of exact judgment. The attitude of fairness, the judicial attitude, which requires all relevant circumstances to be taken into cognizance, every case to be regarded objectively, the elimination of all preconception and prejudice, the minimizing of the personal equation, is precisely the mental attitude which critical judgment demands The judicial mind is the essential qualification of the scientist, no less than of the judge The man to whom we turn when looking for fair dealing, fearless rectitude and impartial judgment, is he whom we deem capable of taking a broad, unbiased, a well-informed, and logical view of the case, the man who will not be swayed by preconceived impressions, carried away by impulse, blinded by custom and tradition, ruled by emotions They are qualities of the intellect, both in regard to fullness of adequate knowledge, and to critical and discriminating use of it , they are qualities which constitute intellectual honesty and competence , they are the essential and fundamental conditions of rational thought

But the connection is, we shall see, still closer A postulate lies at the foundation of all notions of justice the equal claim of all individuals. But that postulate, though affirmative in form, really embodies a series of negations It rests upon the repudiation of all claims to privileged conduct and privileged dealing Those claims can produce no other title to recognition than traditions, consolidated assumptions, established power, claims which are utterly incapable of bearing the test of critical examination, which cannot make good their pretensions on the ground of rational sanction. It has been as a direct result of the growth of the critical

spirit that such irrational claims have been attacked and repudiated It has been as a consequence of that critical repudiation that the ideal of equality of rights has been established, and it is upon that affirmation and that repudiation that the modern spirit of justice and all its ethical consequences are founded

Considered abstractly and isolatedly an individual has no rights. A right presupposes a contract, and there exists no formal or tacit contract establishing any of the claims advanced in relation to life, liberty of conduct, of thought or speech, property, or any other demand made on the social organization by individuals or classes in the name of right and justice The affirmation of the rights of man is pure unsupported fiction and dogmatic assertion Right only exists as a correlative of wrong Apart from the circumstance that there are wrongdoers, the notion of individual right is devoid of meaning It is because there have been men who have used their power to do violence, to oppress and exploit others, because there have been murderers, robbers, despoilers, extortors, compelling their fellow-men into slavery, appropriating their labour, crushing their lives and their minds, that the notion of 'the rights of man' has arisen, the rights, namely, not to be murdered, robbed, exploited, crushed The right of the individual is simply the right not to be wronged Hence it is that all ethical law, in its primary and primitive form at least, is negative 'Thou shalt not ' The affirmation of human right is in truth the denial of the title to inflict wrong It is quite true, as Nietzsche tells us, that ethic, morality, originates with the weak, that is, with the oppressed It is protective, protestive 'Thou shalt not ' means '*Thou* shalt not injure *me*.' Manifestly it could never have originated with the oppressor himself, as a protest against his own action, as 'I shall not ' It is the expression of wrongs suffered by the weak at the hands of the strong, it is the protest of the oppressed against the powerful The oppressed weak are always morally in the right When they protest against power, they are protesting against moral wrong when they defend their interests, their

concrete 'rights,' they are defending moral Right, righteousness. Their interests and those of abstract morality necessarily coincide. From the nature of the case rebels are always right. Kings were right against pope and emperor; barons and priests were right against kings, the middle class were right against barons and priests, the proletarians are right against the middle class. The weaker are morally right.

And the powerful are always morally wrong Primarily power and wrong are coextensive All power wielded by man over man is an aggression. That power, the object of human competition, seeks the profit of the strong at the cost of the weak, all power encroaches on equity, is unjust, oppressive. Even when expedient as an administrative function, or necessary as guidance and protection, or beneficial and blessed as leadership, power, of its own nature, inevitably tends and turns to abuse and oppression

It has long been discovered that absolute power is intrinsically bad, no matter who exercises it The English came to perceive very definitely that to give absolute power to a saint would mean throwing open the gates of hell. Absolute power has been abolished not because rulers are bad men, but because absolute power is necessarily bad Lord Acton well said, "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men (meaning powerful men) are almost always bad men, even when they exercise influence and not authority, still more when you superadd the tendency or certainty of corruption by authority" In English history there is scarcely a sovereign from William I to George I who, tried on the count of murder alone by the same standards as common delinquents, would have escaped the gallows.

It is not at all a question of deliberately abusing power, of 'yielding to the temptations of power,' it is not a question of 'wickedness' It is an inevitable consequence of the fact that power-thought is inseparable from the exercise of power, that the mind of the power-holder ceases to move in the orbit of rational thought, that his mental processes become inevitably stricken with

the disease of falsification by power-thought. He may with all the force of his intention earnestly exercise his power in the service of humanity, yet he can only do so by power-thought, he wields power, therefore he is *right* in the manner he wields it The very best moral intentions in unchecked power are stultified by the very fact of power in the service of individual opinion, and by the falsification of judgment inseparable from that fact The saint and the philosopher are every whit as pernicious in possession of absolute power as the raving despot Louis IX of France was canonized not only by the Church, but by universal opinion, as the ideal of a crowned saint whose sole end was righteousness and his people's good, yet he was in fact a villainous persecutor, and we have already had occasion to note in his own words his amiable conception of his duties It would be difficult to point in the Renaissance period to a figure more perfectly admirable in its quiet wisdom, idealism, and gentle heroism than that of Sir Thomas More, yet his one brief spell of power as Chancellor of England is marked by bloody and heinous persecution.

What is true of absolute power is correspondingly true of all power whatsoever in every form and in every degree, whether it be the power of privilege, or of the strong hand, of money, of mere intellectual authority, whether it be that of a ruler or of a Jack-in-office, of priest or demagogue. It results in injustice not because men are wicked, but because power corrupts moral judgment. The power of an autocrat is not indeed by any means the worst evil. Far more deeply pernicious is that of a class, for the authority of the approved morality it creates is proportionate to the numerical strength of that class. The very worst and most immoral tyranny is that of a majority

Paddy's proverbial attitude of being 'agin the government' is the expression of the universal law that all power, no matter by whom exercised, tends to abuse and injustice; the chances are, therefore, always ten to one that in order to be on the side of right you must be 'agin the government'

IV

THE 'INNATE CONSCIENCE' OF POWER

Primarily and essentially morality is nothing else than protest and resistance against power. In a mere state of nature the strong man has it in his power to cudgel, maltreat, reave, rob, despoil and kill the weak What is to prevent him from so doing? Anteriorly to the development of a moral tradition nothing whatever, no sentiment, or categorical imperative, or sympathy

There is no such thing as an inborn, inherent moral conscience Conscience is a social product So far is the strong man from being restrained by any conscience that, on the contrary, his feelings are highly flattered by the consciousness and exhibition of his power. His wigwam is hung with the scalps of his victims, the spoils of his depredations are ostentatiously displayed The praises of his strength which none dare resist are sung by his poets. He is the 'hero,' the strong man celebrated by the bards from Achæan court to Icelandic hall, the noble, the aristocrat of the historian; till, in another age, he becomes the 'successful man,' the self-helper of Sir Samuel Smiles "Seldom hast thou provided wolves with hot meat," scornfully exclaims the coy daughter of the Jarl in the idyll of the Saga, spurning the suit of Egil, "for a whole autumn no raven hast thou seen croaking over the carnage", but the hero conciliates and wins her by proudly singing "I have marched with my bloody sword, and the raven has followed me Furiously we fought, the fire passed over the dwellings of men; and those who kept the gates we have sent to sleep in blood." Heroic and magnificent, not in their own sight alone, is the boundless fiendishness and treachery of the wild beasts of the Italian fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, of the Sforzas, the Visconti, the Baglionis, the Malatestas. Matarazzo, the chronicler of the Baglioni, exhausts every epithet in giving vent to his admiration for those ruffians. Grifonetto who, for no other motive than ambition,

slaughtered nearly the whole of his relatives in their beds, "*sembrava un angiolo di Paradiso*", Astorre is compared to Mars, and Gianpaolo, who, like the rest, murdered many of his kinsmen and his own wife, was "a valiant and gallant knight of almost divine talent" And after æons of morality is the millionaire exploiter of to-day incommodated by qualms of conscience? Is he not, on the contrary, inordinately proud of himself?

The innate and original psychological correlative to power and every abuse of it, every evil-doing, is not at all contrition or a guilty conscience, but exultant pride. Pride is the accompaniment of power Every form of pride and ostentation is a display of power and injustice, despotic pride, aristocratic pride, martial pride, pride of birth, pride of wealth—the glorifications of abused power Is not pride the last and most persistent attribute of the wielder of power, his last infirmity? When all is lost, when he has been dispossessed, brought to justice, a grand heroic aureola will yet surround him to the last, wherein he will with magnificent gesture cloak himself, and contemptuously turning to the *canaille*, proudly exclaim "I have treated you as dogs"

Of such kind is the 'innate conscience' of power

CHAPTER II

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY GENESIS OF MORALITY

I

PRIMARY GENESIS OF MORALITY

How, in a humanity that is gratified and flattered by the exercise of power, whose conscience exults in the act of oppression, is, like all nature, like all animality, cruel, and declares force and craft to be admirable—how can a *moral* conscience arise at all? How can any restraining idea giving the lie direct to nature, to the inevitable judgments and values of power-thought, introduce itself, come into existence and develop?

That strange phenomenon has had two distinct, successive origins one primary in the primitive herd, the other secondary in differentiated society

The primary genesis of morality has taken place in a quite automatic and inevitable way in the primitive human herd The propensity of the strong man to bully and kill is very soon and very naturally felt to be a peril to all weaker men He is a danger to all He must be stopped, he must be 'punished' Even the strong man can be overpowered by numbers if he runs amuck. And as every member of the tribe, even the strongest, may at any time find himself in a position of disadvantage with regard [illegible]er, it very soon becomes a tacitly accepted principle that one member must not kill or do violence to another The sixth 'commandment,' as likewise the seventh (the female being one of the earliest forms of property), and the eighth, are automatically established conditions of gregarious existence. They establish themselves by the force of circumstances even before the appearance of

spoken language and formulated thought, even before the appearance of humanity. They are immediate necessary results of gregariousness

The self-protective putting down of a dangerous individual evolves very naturally from a feeling of fear and prudence, into one of anger, of 'righteous' indignation. The dangerous man becomes the 'bad,' the 'wicked' man The deterrent dread of the community's anger becomes, on the other hand, a shrinking from its disapproval The man who is 'tempted' to use his advantage to the detriment of another, is primitively restrained by fear of the consequences But has he not himself been with the rest of the tribe 'righteously indignant' at acts of despotism in others? Has he not denounced others as bad'? To the fear of the consequence is added a sense of consistent shame, the deterrent motive becomes 'conscience,' self-respect, a point of honour When the strong man finds himself in a position to take advantage of the weak, his self-esteem, his jealousy of his good name (a type of feeling very keenly developed in primitive man[1] as in children) will restrain him He does not like being called 'bad' he shrinks from being an object of public indignation[2]

The point of honour as a moral motive is, be it incidentally noted, far older and more primitive than any feeling of sympathy and humanity Among the

[1] See Westermarck *Origin of Moral Ideas*, vol ii pp 138-9

[2] That other elements enter into the primitive evolution of the moral deterrent, I am quite prepared to admit I am here concerned only with setting forth what I consider to be the essential and fundamental feature of that evolution Religious ideas play an early and conspicuous part in the process As has been shown by Frazer (*Psyche's Task*), dread of the ghost of a murdered man constitutes a widespread form of deterrent feeling, and so likewise do the tabus attaching to property and sex relations. But it is easy to perceive that those religious ideas are but a manifestation and expression of the self protective hostile attitude of the community towards violence They are secondary and derivative The gods punish what men resent Religious feelings powerfully reinforce morality—as when the 'bad' man is looked upon not only with indignation, but with superstitious horror—but they do not create it

Semites, for instance, the rigid observance of the code of honour, as in the laws of hospitality, may coexist with the most callous ferocity; as when the robber Yacûb in a nocturnal raid on the treasure-house of the Prince of Sistan, stumbled over a lump of salt, the symbol of hospitality, and by chance tasting it, retired forthwith without spoil. The mere fact of stumbling over a tent-rope necessitates that a stranger, even if he belong to a tribe with which a blood-feud exists, should be considered and treated as a sacred guest, and so forth.[1] So in the barbaric ages of Europe we constantly meet with acts of ostentatious magnanimity, conjoined in one and the same person with ghoulish deeds unscrupulously committed.

The simple natural mechanism of the primary genesis of morality is vividly demonstrated by the fact that where such relations and causes have not operated, no morality, no idea of morality, no conscience has developed at all. The causes which have automatically given rise to those ideas when operating on the individuals of a community, did not exist and did not operate in the relations between tribe and tribe, nation and nation Hence there is no such thing as international morality. The combination of the weak against the strong is here much more difficult and uncertain One tribe or State could not clearly realize that aggression against some other distant tribe was a menace against itself, it was not its business to meet trouble half-way and convert the possibility of conflict into a certainty. To organize an alliance of menaced States against a possible aggressor was a complex diplomatic operation, and there was in most cases no guarantee that the combination would be strong enough to ensure its object Consequently such a thing as international morality has never developed; those human relations remain, or have remained until quite lately absolutely, crudely and primitively immoral. The very acts condemned by social

[1] See, for many further examples, W Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage*

morality are in the same breath glorified in international relations. No trace of conscience developed. Bad faith, theft, murder remained, as they are in the primitive psychology of power, not vices but virtues In the Italian and European doctrine of the 'Balance of Power' there came into operation a principle somewhat resembling in its operation that of primitive herd-equilibrium, and it consequently gave rise to some ideas of international right, of international law But it was obviously extremely crude and ineffectual in its action, and it is only to-day that by the scheme of a League of Nations' the artificial construction of the very mechanism which has automatically brought the idea of morality into the world, is being contemplated.

II

SECONDARY GENESIS OF MORALITY

The fact, which presents itself as a difficulty to the conception of moral progress, that many of the lowest and most primitive tribes are more moral than civilized communities is perfectly true—in a sense. They are moral from the absence of the conditions of immorality, in the same way as beasts are more moral than men. Perfect morality is maintained by the automatic operation of the laws of primary gregarious morality. So long as that state continues morality is secure.

But let any form of personal or class power arise, let any difference establish itself, as between conquerors and conquered, priests and laymen, owners and non-owners, and the entire foundation of the primitive condition of mutual abstention is at once entirely destroyed. There is then no motive whatsoever why the strong should not

do as he pleases with those whom he holds in his power. No restraint will arise from the action or opinion of his fellow-masters. Quite on the contrary, it is their interest that their own power and privilege should be upheld, and it is most strenuously upheld by every notion, estimate, system of moral values obtaining amongst them. Established opinion, that is, the opinion, the morality of the dominant class, will emphatically justify and sanction the aggressor.

We have then to do with a second genesis of morality, quite distinct from that which is the automatic outcome of the gregarious state. When a system of dominant powers and prerogatives, upheld and sanctioned by an equally consolidated body of opinion, supplants the promiscuous equalitarian community, the primitive law of mutual abstention ceases to be operative.

That primary morality of gregarious origin actually favours the immorality introduced by the differentiation of power. For it supplies it with the already existent moral values, with the portentous words 'good' and 'bad,' 'right' and 'wrong' which it has created. And those values are at once seized upon by power-thought and transformed. So that they actually come to be used as its weapons in the service and validation of its immoral position. The established power at once becomes 'good' and 'right,' and it is the resister, the insubordinate, the rebel, who becomes 'bad,' 'wicked.' It is he, not the oppressor, who comes to suffer from a 'bad conscience'!

Here then is a situation—and it is that of the constituted world of human relationships above the most rudimentary phases—far more desperate for the prospects of moral development. Not only is necessarily immoral power in the saddle, fairly secure against any self-defensive action, but the very moral values, transformed by its power-thought, are deflected from their original significance and are now on its side. They are transposed. Wrong is right and right is wrong. How can that falsification rectify itself, how can the original values reassert themselves, how can the second genesis of morality take place?

Ultimately in one way only. In the same way as primitive morality imposed itself, in the same way as the powerful have imposed their will and their morality, in the only possible way—by physical force As the existing system of human relations is, in its immoral aspect, representative of the cold steel of oppression, so in its moral aspect, it is representative of the cold steel of revolt Every human right, every step in the development of justice in human relations, has been wrested by actual physical force from the grasp of the holders of power

But a far greater difficulty presents itself Established power is protected by a much more formidable defence than any physical force of which it can dispose It is protected by power-thought, by its falsification of values, a weapon so formidable that it renders physical force itself almost superfluous Just as the oppressors could never bring themselves to acknowledge the real foundation of their power, to admit that it rested on physical force, but have always insisted on 'justifying' it, on regarding it as founded upon right, righteousness, so likewise the oppressed, so long as they have remained under the influence of power-thought have remained loyal to their oppressors, they have looked upon it as a sacred duty, an honour and a glory, to toil, to fight, to lay down their lives for them The slave, the serf, the oriental or feudal vassal, may suffer and lament, but he does not dispute the authority of his oppressor, or rebel against it On the contrary, he would be shamed and scandalized at any attack on that power He laments his misfortunes as he would those arising from an earthquake or a storm, without a thought of blasphemy The physical force wielded by oppressors has mostly been that lent to them by the loyalty of their victims It is through the power of intellectual and moral theories that they have held and exercised their mastery. The peasant armies slaughtering one another in the dynastic quarrels of their masters are glowing with *patriotism* The Vendéan peasant is filled with heroic rage against those who would liberate him from his tyrants The Russian serf worships his 'little father' There is

nothing more tragically pathetic than the persistent loyalty of the oppressed to their oppressors.

To-day when the rumblings of proletarian revolt are clearly audible, we are somewhat offended by the crude irreverence of the rebels, their brutal discard of all respect, their 'bad manners' But the real wonder is the old humility and deference of the poor, the harrowing 'sweet reasonableness' of the wretch who 'knows his place,' who knows 'what is due to his betters,' his gratitude and respect for 'the gentle folks' Our feelings are wounded by the brutal cynicism of the rebel, but how could our feelings endure the coals of fire heaped upon the heads of the rich and educated by the deference of the poor and ignorant? As if forsooth their poverty and ignorance were not the most stinging of reproaches

So long as the extra-rational foundations of privilege were unquestioningly accepted, claims to equality, to right, to justice, could not, and did not arise. So long as the divine nature of kingship was undisputed, every abuse of tyranny could exist unchallenged, so long as feudal power was looked upon as part of a superhumanly established order, every excess to which unchecked authority gives rise could proceed unquestioned. It is only when they have come to perceive that what they regarded as a sacred truth was a lie, that what they had been taught to look upon as right was iniquitous wrong, it is then only that the injured have rebelled It is the exposure of the basic irrationality, of the justifying lie, which brings about the overthrow of the abuse. The oppressed have only revolted against tyranny or injustice, however atrocious, when they have clearly learned to perceive it as irrational, mendacious, false

III

NECESSITY OF INTELLECTUAL PREPARATION

The mental world created in harmony with the ruling interests of the strong is necessarily false. Necessarily, because that which is out of harmony with natural law, unjust, cannot be justified by ideas corresponding to facts. While the thing itself is unadapted, the theory of it cannot chime with the reality of things. Wrong can only be justified and sanctioned by a lie. The wrong and the lie are indissolubly correlated. And it is not the wronged who attack the wrong-doer, but rational thought which attacks the lie. The process by which justice is advanced is never a mere contest of force, any more than it is a process of conversion of the unjust. The system of ideas by which unjust power is 'justified' must first be stripped of its halo of sophistry and sanctity by rational thought, must first stand out in its naked irrationality, before there can be any forces of revolt.

Revolt takes place, of course, against actual grievances, and is therefore interested. The actual motive is interest, not principles. The oppressed are in the first place driven to revolt by actual suffering, hunger, and even by mere envy and greed. The revolt of the wronged is moral, not because they are animated by any high ideal, but because their interests necessarily coincide with morality. It is out of the conflict of interests or private ends that the principle, the morality is evolved.

And since it is impossible for the utterly crushed and oppressed to revolt at all effectively, when they have done so it has usually been in alliance with other classes whose motives were frankly venal and interested. And thus that sordid element has played a conspicuous part in many of the most important emancipating movements.

The powers of an omnipotent and all-devouring Church were first curbed by needy and rapacious nobles. The power of kings and nobles, that is, power founded on privilege, has been constantly checked and sapped, and finally overthrown, by the growth of another form of

power, the power of money. The opposition offered by the commercial classes, by Lombard, Florentine, Flemish, Hanseatic, English merchants, in the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance, against the exactions of imperial feudatories, nobles, and kings, was one of the main checks on tyranny, one of the chief seeds of liberty. The enormous part played by interested purposes of the most fulsome kind, by sheer covetousness, in all the movements of the Reformation, is familiar to all. In Germany the secession from Rome was brought about by the appetite of rulers for Church lands, in Switzerland the success of Zwingli was owing to the appropriation by Zurich and other cities of the domains of the Church The foundation of the Anglican Church is one long story of the most utterly sordid avarice and unmitigated greed and bribery. And we find everywhere, in every emancipating movement, the same selfish, calculating, mercenary spirit at work The American Revolution arose from the reluctance of shopkeepers to part with tax-money Even the French Revolution was initiated, not by starving and oppressed millions, but by profiteering merchants and speculators who objected to being taxed

But those facts are apt to be profoundly misapprehended The exponents of economic determinism find it easy to use them in representing avarice and interest as the sole agents at work in all those movements But those agencies have never operated until intellectual criticism had done its work

As long as the world quailed in terror under the one paramount, exclusive thought of hell-fire, the Church could draw into its ubiquitous suckers the entire substance of Europe There was no protest, no resistance. Not until the twelfth century when the ice began to crack, when unquestioning faith had ceased to be universal, when Europe rapidly became riddled with heresy, did the land-hunger of priests and monks begin to be opposed and curbed, and kings and barons to cry 'Hands off.' No thought of seizing Church goods, of arresting the bleeding of their domains by Rome, ever occurred to German princes till Huss, and Luther,

and Zwingli had formulated clearly the outrageousness of papal pretensions. Henry VIII could do nothing but for Erasmus and Colet and the Lollardry smouldering among the people The interests and cupidities of princes have merely been powerful auxiliaries in the battles of emancipation, auxiliaries which have often determined the victory, but were themselves but tools of the intellectual forces The actual sufferers, the crushed and oppressed, when they have risen against tyranny, and barbarity, and injustice, have been interested, not theoretically inspired by abstract principles, but those interested motives could not operate until the critical unmasking of irrational claims had taken place Till then all the forces which make for justice are paralysed

Every one is familiar with the accounts of the misery of the French people on the eve of the Revolution, the crushing exactions, feudal dues, dimes, gabels, Church tithes, which wholly swallowed up their substance, the chronic famine and destitution which sent haggard ghosts wandering over the desolate land It is obvious, we think, that such a state of things could not endure, it must inevitably result in rebellion But things were just as bad at the death of Louis XIV as at that of Louis XV, and there was no rebellion The conditions were worse in Germany than they were in France On the other side of the Pyrenees, a hundred years earlier, the oppression and misery of the people was even worse, the country was depopulated by famine, desolated by utter anarchy and by exactions, the people were bond-slaves, the starving population fled from the villages at the approach of the tax-gatherers, while these tore down the wretched dwellings to sell the materials, armed crowds fought for bread before the bakers' shops more fiercely than they did in Paris, the unpaid household troops begged for food in the streets and at the doors of monasteries And yet, beyond some demonstrations against the ministers in Madrid, nothing happened Or rather, the most extraordinary thing continued to happen, the starving, spoliated, and tortured populace was filled with the most passionate loyalty towards its oppressors. it was ready

to die for 'throne and altar.' A few years later, when the power of the Bourbons was being humbled by Marlborough and Prince Eugene in Germany, Flanders and Italy, when Peterborough and Stanhope scattered before them the wretched armies of Spain, the same victims of misrule rose everywhere in defence of their king, the plundered villagers scraped together all the money they could lay their hands on, and brought it to the king with tears of passionate devotion, and the peasants of Castile and Andalusia neutralized by their obstinate heroism the triumphs of Blenheim and Ramillies

There was no rational thought, no criticism of the situation in their case, no glimmer of light whereby to discern the source of their evils in their true aspect It is that purely intellectual process of enlightenment and criticism which is the indispensable condition of the protest of the oppressed Until it has taken place their ethical conceptions are as immoral as those of their oppressors, their loyalty, their devotion, their endurance, their veneration, their bowing submission to the divinely appointed order, their contentment with the station in which Providence has placed them, are the counterpart of the ruthless injustice, the tyranny, the rapacity, the cruelty, the barbarity of the holders of power

IV

EUROPEAN LIBERATIONS

But furthermore, the revolt of the oppressed, although instigated by the crude facts of self-interest, is never viewed by them for long under that aspect alone. It

is true that class interest and general principle, must be felt to coincide in order that large masses of men may be stirred to vigorous, to desperate action Any one who has ever had any share in endeavouring to organize collective action in support of an abstract principle dissociated from any perceptible and palpable utilitarian interest, knows full well what a dead weight of inertia and indifference has to be encountered But it is a psychological law that the cause, the principle, the claim, the war-cry, which at first was adopted at the suggestion of an interested motive, comes in time to claim devotion for its own sake The force of the interested motive vanishes more and more, that of the principle, the abstract claim increases until it completely fills the mental field Exactly the same thing happens, as I have already hinted, in the case of unjust and oppressive power by dint of repeating the theoretical justifications of injustice, the oppressor comes to firmly believe them , and the tyranny which began with barefaced cupidity and rapacity, ends by dying a blessed martyr to those sacred and divine rights which it invented That is how clashing interests become moral principles It was not a feeling of self or class interest which upheld the Protestants who marched to the stake praising God, the Flemish women who, laid alive in their graves, sang hymns while their murderers shovelled the earth over their faces

Religious enthusiasm itself, that is, reforming, heretical religious enthusiasm, was the form which rational criticism assumed for a long time with the masses of the people, the only form which it could assume So inextricably are the religious emancipating movements of European history entangled with aims of social and political emancipation, that it baffles the analysis of historians to disentangle the two Speaking of Charles V, Motley remarks " He was too shrewd a politician not to recognize the connection between aspirations for religious and for political freedom. It was the political heresy which lurked in the restiveness of religious reformers under dogma, tradition, and supernatural sanction to temporal power, which he was disposed to combat to the death " That religious sanction is by far the most common and

important—though not the sole—form of justifying theory on which constituted despotism founds itself. Divine Right is the type of sanction to power. Hence religious heresy and criticism has always led to resistance against tyranny Heretical thought has invariably been accompanied, or immediately followed by revolt against established power The bold teaching of Abélard resulted in the revolt of his pupil, Arnaldo da Brescia, and the proclamation of a republic in Rome, Wycliff was followed by John Ball and the Lollards; John Huss by the revolt of Bohemia, and with the Lutheran reformation all the forces of social revolt were let loose, the great Peasant War of Germany, the Dutch rebellion were its immediate results

With the one glorious exception of the Netherlands, all those efforts of resistance on the continent of Europe bore scarcely any fruit The forces of coercion were too mighty, revolt extinguished in blood and fire, only tightened the fetters of oppression. Many of the most atrocious features of the feudal system, date from the Jacquerie and the Peasant War The United Provinces, which celebrated their deliverance from Spanish tyranny and obscurantism by founding the Universities of Leyden and Utrecht, and where, round jolly Roemer Visscher and his accomplished daughters, there gathered a company which included Vossius, the great Grotius, author of *International Law* and *The Freedom of the Sea*, Brederoo the comic poet, van Vondel the dramatist, Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, Swammerdam the first biologist, van Leeuwenhoek the founder of microscopical science, Huygens the physicist, Rembrandt, Franz Hals,—became the seed-bed of all liberal thought, and prepared the way for English and all subsequent political development. Owing to the inability of unarmed English rulers to enforce 'law and order,' England's laws and England's political order, became an envied example to the world. Nearly every step in the struggle which built up English liberties, wore a religious aspect. But those struggles were fruitful of results, not because they were religious, but because they were Protestant. Catholic religious enthusiasm in

France, in Spain, in England, produced, not liberty, but tyranny, not Commonwealth and Declaration of Right, but St. Bartholomews, *quemaderos*, and Bloody Maries Protestantism meant, so far as it went, criticism, rational revolt against dogmatic authority, attacks by private judgment, whether acknowledged in principle or not, on constituted lies The attitude of Protestantism, of No-Popery—whatever dogmas and fanaticisms it might hug—was towards the audacious unveracities of the old orthodoxy, towards priestcraft, hocus-pocus (*hoc est corpus*), identical with that which rational criticism would have adopted. The Lollards and Independents treated the sacred and holy things of the established cult in exactly the same blasphemous and sacrilegious way as the *sans-culottes* The Protestant speaks of Catholicism in the self-same words as the most 'vulgar' and 'offensive' militant atheist The throwing off of injustice and despotism, and later, as a necessary consequence, the extension of humanitarian principles, has been accomplished in England by the Protestants, and by those shades of Protestantism in particular which were furthest removed from constituted religious authority, by Independents, dissenters, puritans, nonconformists, evangelicals Whiggism and liberalism are traditionally associated with nonconformity The contemporary pietist, who states that England's greatness is due to the Bible, is not altogether wrong, it is due to the Bible in so far as the Bible stood as the symbol of the right to private interpretation, as against theocratic absolutism While Europe still lay sunk in mediæval barbarism, England presented by contrast the spectacle of a land of freedom, and was, not without right, conscious of superior righteousness

But the liberating force of Protestantism which had made the Revolution of 1649 reached the term imposed by its inherent and necessary limitations Intellectual development meanwhile did not stop at the phase which had found expression in the Protestant Reformation The process of secularization went on apace, no longer were the issues theological, but purely secular From the great school of Padua, where from the fourteenth century Aristotelian tradition and that of Arabic experi-

mental science and mathematics had commingled and struggled, and the contest had at last resulted in the triumph of the latter and a new conception of the spheres and methods of knowledge, a wave had swept over Europe on the crest of which rose Descartes and Gassendi. William Harvey had not only profited there from the lessons of Fabricius of Aquapendente, but even more perhaps from those of the professor of physics, Galilei. Pascal, prosecuting the researches of Galilei's pupil, Torricelli, had weighed the air. Seeking refuge on the Continent from the tumults of the Puritan Revolution, Bacon's secretary, Hobbes, had met Galileo, Gassendi and Mersenne; and when the Merry Monarch, in the reaction against puritanical tyranny, re-entered London, the first person he greeted was his old tutor, who not only furnished him with the doctrine of his own omnipotence in the *Leviathan*, but with a lively interest in the new developments of the experimental philosophy. That interest became a universal fashion; not only the King, but Buckingham, peers, prelates had their own chemical laboratories. "It was almost necessary," in the words of Macaulay, "to the character of a fine gentleman to have something to say about air-pumps and telescopes"; and the beauties of Whitehall drove to the Gresham laboratories to see experiments in static electricity and magnetism. That dilettantism was the outward manifestation of deeper and more momentous developments of the spirit of the times in Restoration England—the Royal Society, Robert Boyle, Hooke, Hallay, Newton. The efflorescence of seventeenth-century English science, was in turn but an aspect of the operation of the same spirit in every field of thought. One of the members of the Royal Society, Sir William Petty, created the science of *Political Arithmetic*, the precursor of political economy, and showed the agricultural labourer's wage to be fairly fixed at four shillings a week. As Puritan Protestantism had produced the Revolution of 1649, the new secular matter-of-factness produced the Whig Revolution of 1688, of which John Locke was the philosophic apologist as Milton had been that of the Commonwealth.

Those great developments of English thought, the social results already achieved by English freedom, wrought a profound influence upon the intellect of the Continent, where Montesquieu placed the English constitution, and Voltaire English science and English thought on pedestals for the admiration and emulation of all thinking men The seed fell on fertile soil

In the same manner as the Protestant liberation of the Northern Renaissance had settled upon its lees, while the evolution of rational thought proceeded upon its course, so the intellect of Whig-revolution England snugly ensconced itself in smiling slumbers in the beatific contemplation of its unforgetable achievements, of its Glorious Constitution, the perfection of which nothing could better, while the growth of human thought passed meanwhile on, and the seeds of its English season fructified at the new spring in France

The French eighteenth century is one of the grand climacterics in the history of human growth All the seeds which had been germinating in Europe since the twelfth century ripened then into fruit a new era began, in its significance one of the epochs of most concentrated glory in the evolution of the race Our current view and impression of it has been, and still is in a large measure, too deeply coloured by the profound detestation of all its tendencies that has poured upon it, to permit of the full magnitude of its worth being adequately appreciated Our attention has for a hundred years been trained upon its defects and imperfections Much in the theories of the *philosophes* (contemptuously so referred to by Carlyle, to avoid desecration of the appellation of philosopher) was crude and a priori, and lacking in a sufficient basis for induction, their generalizations were superficial, their shibboleths and abstractions trivial, their rhetoric declamatory It is precisely because it was so genuinely alive and fruitful that their thought has outgrown its early form, and become 'old-fashioned.' We do not generally go to it for inspiration because it has become renewed as living thought in our own blood It is only the traditionalism which struggles against progress which finds inspiration in

unchangeable authorities. when our appetite is for fossils, we go back to the Stone Age for our textbooks When we wish to study physical science we do not go to Prevost, and Fourier, and Coulomb, or Lavoisier: we study Prevost's theory of exchanges, Fourier's theorem, Coulomb's balance, and Lavoisier's discoveries in modern scientific language and modern textbooks.

As in seventeenth-century England science expanded in eighteenth-century France, widely and eagerly cultivated, popularized in crowded lecture-rooms, and was there shaped for the first time into that organized body of knowledge and systematized inquiry which was to bear immediate fruit in the conquests of the nineteenth century In all the intellectual activity of that active time—even the most seemingly trifling, and flippant, and superficial—a new quality, a terrible new dangerous virtue became awake When the King's permission was requested for the performance of Beaumarchais' comedy, *The Marriage of Figaro*, he exclaimed, "But, Messieurs, if permission is granted to perform this play, one ought—to be quite consistent—to pull down the Bastille!" *Figaro* went through sixty-eight performances,—and the Bastille did duly get pulled down It was by those men, Bayle, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alembert, Volney, Holbach, Condorcet, and their contemporaries, who cast aside all conventional formulas, resolved to think for themselves, and, what is more, to speak out boldly what they thought, to own no other sanction or criterion than rational thought, that the world has been transformed Behind them and around them stood mediævalism in all its ignorance and darkness and tyranny over life and mind, for all the superficial veneer of refinement laid over it by the Renaissance and the 'Grand Siècle' After them is a changed world, the modern world It was those men who threw open the portals from the one into the other

The Revolution—the product and culmination of the gigantic intellectual battle—stands alone among the events of human history The antagonist which it faced was unredeemed feudalism and absolutism, in the most consolidated and ugliest form of its iniquity, un-

adulterated and untouched by any evolution On that one occasion in history there was no tinkering, or veiled issues, or compromises, or expedient formulas, or semi-logic, in the cry of protest and the work of reform Only for a moment, in '89 and the Constitution of '91, was there any such genteel, mealy-mouthed, good-mannered reserve in dealing with evil. After that first moment, things were actually called by their names, and treated accordingly—*sans phrases* With a radicalism and drastic thoroughness destined to strike everlasting horror in future ages, not only gross enormities and injustices, feudalism, Divine Right, Sacred Majesty, but the entire world-system of lies and artificialities, irrationalities, root and branch, bag and baggage, down even to stupid weights and measures and calendars, were swept away at one fell swoop Those newly emancipated feudal vassals were not content with 'glorious constitutions,' 'ballot boxes,' 'liberal reforms within the sphere of practical politics', they called in plain, ringing, unmeasured words for the last consequences of rational thought, for plain, uncompromising justice, for equality, for the total and final abolition, without terms or reserves, of humbug and injustice in its million forms Nay, they called for it, not only for 'the State,' not only for France, but for the human race

Of course they 'failed' Every European government, England, with its Puritan and Whig liberties and 'model constitution' at the head of them, rose in arms to put down the unutterable scandal How ragged Revolution held its ground against them all, and against priest-led peasants, and swarming traitor vermin in its midst, and humbled them to the dust, is one of the wonders of history But in the end many of the ghosts of the Past came back to sit to this day in possession, and pour their venom on the pages of history, and turn up the whites of their eyes over the horrors of the French Revolution' (More men were killed on St Bartholomew's day by 'throne and altar' than during the whole Revolution, September massacres, Terror and all) What those audacious hot-heads, those *enragés*, what Marat and the Hebertists aimed at, still remains

in Utopia Nevertheless the world which they left behind them, is a realized Utopia compared to the evil dream which they for ever dispelled

V

ETHICS AND POLITICS

I may seem to be confusing politics with ethics, social with moral issues But the real confusion is that whereby such an objection is offered and such a distinction drawn

Mankind has been uplifted out of a past weltering with cruelty and injustice, a past in which four-fifths of the population of Europe endured under the heels of their tormentors such treatment as would to-day raise a storm of indignation were it inflicted on dogs , when men in thousands were legally flayed, impaled, quartered, roasted, boiled , when London was called ' the city of gibbets ' , when none but tyrannous princes and priests had human rights , when the producers of food were made to pay for the right to use their implements , when the infamy of nameless injustice was imperturbably sanctified by law, acquiesced in by literature, upheld by religion ; when no murmur could be uttered against it save at the price of martyrdom Yet no elaboration of professed morality has had anything to do with the triumph of justice which has swept away that hideous nightmare No great new ethical principle has been discovered or proclaimed between the age of the Tudors and that of Victoria Writing in the latter period, Buckle could actually maintain the time-honoured doctrine that morality never changes. No new code, no new moral law, no new creed has burst upon the world , old codes, old moral laws, old creeds have instead been shaken to their foundations

The changes which have taken place have been intellectual, social, political changes That moral evolution whose continuous course towards higher standards of equity, of common justice and humanity we can trace through the centuries, and even within the span of our own memories, has been brought about by resistance to evil in movements which we are pleased to call 'political' and 'social' Irrational justifications of power have been challenged and become invalid, the invasion of individual rights by arbitrary prerogatives has been resisted, baseless formulas have ceased to be uncritically accepted, and, as a consequence, iniquity has been put down, and the world has grown better because the relations between man and man have become more just. The readjustment of human relations has taken place, not through any mysterious growth of moral sentiments, not through any reform in the conscience of wrong-doers, but through the resistance of the wronged It is to the revolt of reason which has clinched its arguments with pike and powder that we owe that measure of moral decency which graces our present civilization, and distinguishes Europe from Dahomey, the twentieth century from the sixteenth. Justice and humanity have been promoted not by ethical codes or Platonic discourses, but by the curtailment of powers established on unreason, by liberty, by democracy

Democracy is the worst form of government It is the most inefficient, the most clumsy, the most unpractical No machinery has yet been contrived to carry out in any but the most farcical manner its principles. It reduces wisdom to impotence and secures the triumph of folly, ignorance, clap-trap and demagogy The critics of democracy have the easiest of tasks in demonstrating its inefficiency But there is something even more important than efficiency and expediency—justice And democracy is the only social order that is admissible, because it is the only one consistent with justice The moral consideration is supreme Efficiency, expediency, even practical wisdom and success must go by the board, they are of no account beside the categorical imperative of justice Justice is only pos-

sible when to every man belongs the power to resist and claim redress from wrong. That is democracy. And that is why, clumsy, inefficient, confused, weak and easily misguided as it is, it is the only form of government which is morally permissible. The ideal form of government is an enlightened and benevolent despotism, but that is an absolutely unrealizable dream much more visionary than any democratic Utopia There can never be an adequately enlightened and justly benevolent despot Your philosopher king is not a practical success Put a Sir Thomas More in power, and you have a Torquemada, your ineffectual Marcus Aurelius is succeeded by a Commodus Justice is only possible through the diffusion of power, and it is in point of fact by the progress of democratic power that the progress of justice has been brought about

And justice is the whole of morality To do wrong is to inflict wrong, to injure There is no other immorality than injustice So manifest is that truth that it never occurred to the ancients in their best days to regard it as otherwise than self-evident, and the connotation of the words δικαιοσύνη and *justitia* was with them equivalent to that of our terms virtue, righteousness, morality It has taken centuries of Oriental ethics to obscure that simple truth

All forms and aspects of morality which are not mere conventional figment and immoral pseudo-moralities, are in truth but aspects of justice, rights that have to be defended against the encroachment of power to do wrong, rights oppressed by irrationalities and lies Sentiments of humanity, respect for human life, compassion for suffering are in fact forms of the spirit of justice, and all wrongs which offend against those feelings are acts of injustice countenanced in the first instance by the morality of dominant power.

It is commonly assumed that the moral condition of a community is the result and expression of moral ideas, but the order of causation is in general the exact reverse —moral ideas are the result of moral conditions. So long as unresisted predominant power, predominant interest, are free to perpetrate wrong, that wrong is neces-

sarily countenanced and consecrated as right The whole moral life of a community is necessarily determined by the standard which, as a concrete system of ethics, upheld and sanctified by accredited opinion, is in actual operation. If the organization of a society be unjust, if it be founded upon the interests of power-holding classes, it is vain to seek for absolute standards of justice, even where those dominant interests are not directly involved The mental law which sets the seal of authoritative approval on the established order, and pronounces it moral, likewise shapes every ethical estimate under that order Divine law always conforms to the type of established human law Some barbarities have not been direct acts of encroachment on the part of a dominant power and subservient to its immediate interests, but they were countenanced by the character of those encroachments And it is through the action of rational criticism that barbaric custom and inhumanity, like the abuses of legitimized power, are eliminated

CHAPTER III

MORALS AND CULTURE

I

SENTIMENT, SYMPATHY, AND REASON

THE favourite doctrine that moral sentiments have arisen out of a natural feeling of sympathy or commiseration, adopted by Schopenhauer and by Darwin as the chief factor in the genesis of ethics is, I believe, entirely erroneous. Feelings of sympathy, of commiseration, of humanity, instead of being the source, are on the contrary the product of moral judgment. The moral *feeling* is posterior to the fact of moral practice. It is after a course of conduct has become established as right, after an injustice and inhumanity has been abolished, that the corresponding feelings of pity, sympathy, become developed. What is regarded as right and proper, or even merely as customary, does not awaken commiseration and sympathy. Those feelings, if any germ of them exists at all, are dismissed and suppressed when the transaction is unquestioningly accepted as praiseworthy. If Queen Louisa of Spain was touched with pity when she turned her head away at the harrowing appeal of the Jewish girl, who with a number of others was led to the stake amid the festivities of the royal marriage, the passing feeling must have been severely checked as a sinful thought.

Nothing is more remarkable in this connection than the fact that witch persecution passed away without a single protest ever being raised against it on the ground of morality. Not a voice was heard in denunciation of the most hideous form of murderous savagery in human annals, more brutal than any gladiatorial shows or religious persecutions, because its victims were the most helpless of human beings. And it was in Scotland,

in puritanical England and in New England, when the influence of moralistic cant was at its height, that those horrors attained their vilest proportions. They lapsed into desuetude fairly rapidly, simply because belief in witchcraft ceased, not because any moral indignation protested in the name of humanity The abomination of the thing was never perceived until it had ceased to exist. Judicial torture was not generally regarded with feelings of pity In a remarkable passage John Evelyn[1] minutely describes the torture of a suspected thief which he witnessed at the Châtelet prison in Paris Although he mentions that the spectacle was "uncomfortable," it does not elicit from him a single word of indignation or condemnation, and the only comment which the hideous scene suggests to him is that "it represented to me, the intollerable sufferings which our Blessed Saviour must needs undergo when his body was hanging with all its weight upon the nailes of the crosse."

We have noted that the old notion that very primitive communities are in many respects more moral than highly civilized ones, is not altogether an illusion But the reason is, as we saw, that the head source of immorality—the existence of privileged class-power—does not exist in those communities The savage is not morally more advanced, but the occasion for morality has not yet arisen That the primitive morality of the savage is not the effect of any delicacy of humane feeling is very strikingly proved by the circumstance that those very primitive communities which charm us by their unsophisticated morality are almost invariably cannibals The old travellers found it difficult to realize that those idyllic South Sea Islanders with whose guilelessness, honesty, hospitality, and peaceful natures they were so charmed, were habitual man-eaters.

Wholesale human sacrifice was once universal The substitution of animal, and later, of ritual sacrifice, arose from a semi-conscious rudiment of scepticism as to the real efficacy of sacrifice As long as it was firmly believed without a shadow of misgiving that it was expedient that one man should die for the people, that

[1] *Diary of John Evelyn*, March 11, 1651

the desired object—tribal safety, prosperity, etc.—would be certainly assured by the procedure, men would not be likely to forgo a direct means of securing those important objects; they would have been great fools had they done so. The very greatness of the price asked—a human life—was a sort of guarantee of the return. The early Hebrew father who sent his first-born 'through the fire to Moloch' was probably a kind father, just as the Fijian who brained his aged mother was a dutiful son. The superstitious theory takes precedence in every case over any sentiment or feeling. The decay of human sacrifice and cannibalism, was not the effect of any mysterious and uncaused 'development of moral sentiment,' but a beginning of religious scepticism.

Moral progress has in every case consisted not in a development of feeling, but in a development of thought; the rational evolution has preceded and brought about the ethical evolution. Of course when once injustice has been rendered obsolete by the pressure of rational revolt in a particular case, a precedent, a principle is created, a sentiment becomes established, just as in the case of the physical power of oppression which becomes converted into 'right,' loyalty, and all the other principles of oppressor morality. Where successful resistance has continuously asserted itself against injustice, the principle of justice becomes itself a war-cry, the moral sentiment becomes naturally extended. But nothing is more conspicuous than the feebleness, the impotence of abstract moral sentiment as such. Unless there be a real material interest disguised under it, or it be the expression of a clear rational process, mere moral principle has scarcely achieved anything at all in the betterment of the world. All history bears witness to the tragic futility of pure abstract moral principle. The morality which confronts evil without allies, merely in the name of morality, has always been waved aside as irrelevant, impracticable, quixotic, inexpedient; it has never succeeded in entering 'the sphere of practical politics.' The protest against negro-slavery which arose in England, where freedom had been won under religious

banners, was for a long time a hopeless cause, the enthusiasts who espoused it were near losing heart. Negro slavery was abolished as an inevitable logical consequence of the rationalistic thought of the French eighteenth-century philosophers, and Wilberforce lamented bitterly in the House of Commons that it had been left to "atheistical and anarchic France" to accomplish that for which he had so long striven in vain. Duelling did not die out in England on moral grounds, but because it came to be thought foolish and absurd. And it is very manifest that war will ultimately be abolished not because it is an atrocious crime, but because it is an intolerable nuisance.

If I do not discuss a province of morality which by a fantastic usage commonly monopolizes in popular language the connotation of the term, namely, sexual morality, it is not only because the theme is too far and deep-reaching in its manifold bearings to be adequately dealt with here, but because no evolution is as yet to be traced in regard to it, for the simple reason that from time immemorial to the present day sexual morality has been entirely dominated by the conception of woman as a proprietary article, and the breeder of heirs to property and caste. The infliction of countless wrongs upon women, the shifting upon them of every burden of factitious disaster arising from passion, as well as its unnatural stimulation by the entire apparatus of prudery, 'modesty,' restrictions, clothes, are all alike products of the institution of despotic proprietary possession which in turn is the foundation-stone of our social order. To 'covet thy neighbour's wife' was as wicked as to covet his ox, or his ass, or anything that is his; nay, more so, for is not every woman the possible mother of an heir to property? Hence must her body be regarded as sinful, tabu, and be carefully veiled and hidden. The root-injustice never having altered, there is little to choose between the sexual morality of one period and that of another. Orgies of 'purity' have naturally alternated

with orgies of enhanced licentiousness, but no process of rational evolution can be exhibited. But now that the momentous question is happily coming to be debated in all its aspects, and that woman like man is claiming power of protest and resistance, this much at least must appear clear—that all hope of setting right the mountain-mass of evil, suffering and injustice for which it stands, lies solely in the resolute facing of facts as they are, in the ruthless disregard of tradition and convention, prejudice, shams and spurious values, no matter how immemorially consecrated, and in resistance to the powers founded upon such The law of moral progress is the same here as elsewhere—the abolition of injustice through the destruction of lies by rational thought

II

MORALITY AND CIVILIZATION

The two things, intellectual development and moral development, far from being, as is commonly pretended, two totally distinct and unrelated aspects of human growth, following each its separate course irrespectively of the other, are on the contrary found everywhere and always indissolubly associated Barbarism does not only mean a rude material life, a primitive fashion of clothes and dwellings, rough tools, ignorance, illiteracy, superstition, it means also inhumanity, cruelty and injustice. Culture and civilization do not represent arts, material comforts, knowledge and intellectual interests and achievements only, but a greater measure of equity, humanity and justice in the life and relations of men The moral development of a people in all ages bears an exact proportion to its degree of intellectual com-

petence and rationality Wherever vigorous intellectual growth takes place, there also the conduct, the *mores*, the morals of the community stand through their fairness and mercifulness in contrast with those of their barbarous and superstitious neighbours

The culture of the first theocratic empires was crude and sterile , so was their ethics But it marked an advance above primal savagery as notable as the intellectual achievements of Babylon and Heliopolis. The dawn of material and intellectual culture was also that of moral ideals Semitic and Egyptian civilization have emerged shamefacedly from their infant phase of human sacrifice and cannibalism In a dim and confused, but zealous and enthusiastic way they recognize and proclaim moral ideals. They have no clear principles, they are incapable of defining the nature, the why and wherefore, of right and wrong , the form of their ethical notions is still largely that of the savage, an enumeration of tabus and rituals, things to be done and things forbidden, decalogues , they are divine commands , justice and mere rites are grotesquely muddled together, abstention from murder and Sabbath observance are tabus of equal importance and authority, philanthropy and phylacteries stand on the same plane of moral obligation But there has arisen amongst them nevertheless the concern for morality, the conception of right which finds expression in Ptah-Hotep and in the code of Khammurabi, in the Psalms of Babylon and in the various religious poetries which she inspired

But it is to Greece, the renewer of mankind, the uplifter of human evolution to a new level, to rationalistic Greece that we must turn for the foundations of ethical development also Of that activity which unlocked every portal of intellectual inquiry, quite the largest proportion was devoted to ethical thought, to wrestling with the problems of conduct, to the building of the conception of ideal right As part and parcel of that mighty intellectual unfolding, infused through all its manifestations, was the ideal of man's worth, of the beauty of his purpose and conduct, matching that

beauty of his body which inspired Praxiteles and Polycleitos The ethical thought of Greece, like all else that she has put forth, has fed all that came after her As in art and in literature, so here also the foundations and principles which she laid down have been the standards which have shaped the world's thought Nay, to a far greater extent than in either art or literature, the results of Greek thought upon the question of right conduct, of just life, which she was the first to make the object of discussion, have remained the highwater-mark of what man has been able to think upon that subject up to the coming of quite new conditions of knowledge, have indeed been in advance of his capacity for many subsequent ages

Yet so long has our European thought been under an influence committed to the depreciation of that aspect of the legacy of Greece, with a view to the extolment and glorification of what passes for the Semitic ideal, that the ethical achievement of Hellas has been prevented from towering on our horizon with the same transcendence as the other fruits of her creative power Even a Matthew Arnold and a Seeley could, under the heavy incubus of that influence, play upon the *leit-motiv* of the superiority of Hebraic over Hellenic ethical inspiration We shall presently have occasion to note how radically false is that traditional estimate

Ethical thought manifesting itself in principle and precept is, as I have said, not the true measure of moral development But the case is somewhat different when we have to do, not with the unctuous profession of fine sentiments consecrated by secular standards, but with principles propounded for the first time, which are accordingly the living expression of real growth That Hellenic ethical thought, like her philosophic and scientific thought, was not decisive, was an inevitable consequence of the lack of scientific data and of the conditions of the ancient world Only the modern age, with its systematized experience and its adequate perception of universal processes and relations, is in a position to approach the root of those problems Without anthropological data, without the conception of evolution, without

co-ordinated natural knowledge, it would be as futile to expect to find the Greek thinker seizing upon the essential meaning and relations of ethics, as to expect Pythagoras or Archimedes to discover cathodic rays

But apart from extensions and reconsiderations which are only just now beginning to be possible, it was Greek thought which created all those ideals which have up to the present constituted the moral sense of Europe, and it went indeed far beyond even the professed and theoretical expression of European morality for many centuries We are apt to fail in appreciating the evolution of what is to us trite and commonplace, and to realize what an achievement lay in its birth into the world Greece not only enounced the paramountcy of moral right over all human goods whatsoever, but in a world which implicitly acknowledged the *lex talionis*, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, affirmed that "it is wrong to requite injustice with injustice, to inflict evil upon any man, whatever we may have suffered at his hand" The dying Perikles rejoiced above all his claims to honour "that no Athenian had ever mourned on his account," and the dying Socrates that he felt no anger against those who had voted for his death And consider, for example, the attitude of Greek thought towards the notion of punishment—that since all evil proceeds from ignorance and folly it calls, like a disease, for the healing hand of the moral physician and not for senseless retribution, to punish is in the Greek speech 'to make just —δικαιοῦν, 'to make temperate'—σωφρονίζειν It has taken twenty centuries for Christian Europe to catch up to that plane of judgment And those conceptions founded themselves upon faith in the natural excellence of man, "for no man is naturally wicked," and sought no external sanction but only the honour of that manhood—"self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control"

Like all her products, the ethical thought of Greece suffered from over-abstraction, from a too detached intellectualism It was first and foremost as thought pure and simple, rather than as thought struck out from the sharp contact with experience and life that

it took shape. It was only later, in the world-contacts of the concrete Roman mind, that it attained the full glow and fertility of its ripeness. Yet originally, as the Greek was the intellectual superior of the Roman, so was he his ethical superior also The hardness of Rome, her coarse tastes, her gladiatorial shows, never could acclimatize themselves on Hellenic soil. Intellect told inevitably on the moral nature of the Greek, even though it was essentially an abstract fruit of thought rather than of life that his ethical spirit developed The moral philosopher, the representative Greek, a Socrates, a Perikles, a Euripides, with all their thought-detachment, do not present themselves to us as pious blackguards like a David or a Solomon With the effulgent growth of the Greek mind, there went a quiet, great and real moral redemption, the Draconian code was but a softened redaction of the usage, the morality of the primitive Greek tribes, and to full-grown Greece it became a proverbial by-word of ferocious brutality.

It is under the influence of Greece that both intellectual culture and humanitarian spirit grew on Latin soil The one accompanied the other from the day when Carneades, in the interval of a diplomatic mission, lectured on justice, and initiated the Greek conquest of Rome The aboriginal *virtus* of Rome, whose energy was absorbed in struggle, domination, and organization, was valour and patriotism, filial and civic discipline, and issued forth in a certain grand punctilio of honour in her dealings with foes and conquered people, as, for instance, in the rule never to attack without previous declaration of war, in the strict and at times heroic keeping of faith It was as Hellenic influence became more and more complete, as all the mental culture and inspiration of Rome became Greek, ceased to be antagonized by the native sternness of the fighter, and was felicitously combined with her native orderly genius for organization, government, law, her natural seriousness and stoicism, and her long habit of balancing conflicting claims, that the great and glorious growth of Roman morality, humanitarian

thought and legislation proceeded to develop From that influence and combination resulted the most important fructification of ethical ideals which the world has seen, ideals which were, as we shall have occasion to note, in many respects false, which suffered at their very root from an original and irremediable deflection, but which nevertheless have served the world for ages as the guiding and guarding lodestar of moral authority. For in truth those fixed and accepted standards of moral law, the spirit which has stood for the categorical ethical imperative throughout the development of Europe, are particularly the product of Rome The foundations and fertilizing impulse came from Greece, and, both through Greece and directly, from the old religious spirit of the East, but in the final form and character which it assumed and in which it has been handed down to the modern world, the 'eternal and absolute' laws of righteousness, and those which stand for the equity of just dealing, the entire ambit of traditional European moral ideas is Roman

To the intellectual culture of Islam, which has been fraught with consequences of such moment, corresponded an ethical development no less notable in the influence which it has exercised The fierce intolerance of Christian Europe was indeed more enraged than humiliated by the spectacle of the broad tolerance which made no distinction of creed and bestowed honour and position on Christian and Jew alike, and whose principles are symbolized in the well-known apologue of the Three Rings popularized by Boccaccio and Lessing It was, however, not without far-reaching influence on the more thoughtful minds of those who came in contact with Moorish civilization But barbaric Europe confessed itself impressed and was stung to emulation by the lofty magnanimity and the ideals of chivalrous honour presented to it by the knights of Spain, by *gentlemen* like the fierce soldier Al-Mansûr who claimed that, though he had slain many enemies in battle, he had never offered an insult to any—an ideal

of knightly demeanour and dignity which twentieth-century England might with profit perpend. The ruffianly Crusaders were shamed by the grandeur of conduct and generosity of Saladin and his chivalry.[1] The ideal of knightly virtue was adopted, the tradition of *noblesse oblige* was established Poetry and romances deeply tinged with Arabian ideas formed the only secular literature which circulated and appealed to popular imagination, and a new conception of the place and dignity of woman passed into Europe through the courts of Provence from the Moorish world, where she shared the intellectual interests and pleasures of man

There never was an 'age of chivalry' Like the golden age it has only existed as a mirage dimly located in the vague distances of an imaginary past Poetic imagination has associated it with the brutal and barbaric times of Charlemagne, or with the legendary figures of a King Arthur or a Parsifal But the ideal of knightliness, of courtesy and honour was throughout the iniquities and abominations of

[1] Of that contrast, which might be so amply illustrated, one instance shall suffice I give it in the words of Professor Palmer from Besant and Palmer's *Jerusalem* "It was agreed that the lives and property of the defenders of Acre should be spared on condition of their paying two hundred thousand dínárs, releasing five hundred captives, and giving up possession of the True Cross The first instalment of a hundred thousand dínárs was given up, but Saladin refused to pay the rest, or to hand over the captives until he had received some guarantee that the Christians would perform their part of the contract, and allow the prisoners of Acre to go free The money was weighed out and placed before Saladin, the captives were ready to be given up, and the 'True Cross' was also displayed Richard (Cœur de Lion) was encamped close by the Merj 'Ayun, and had caused the Acre captives to be ranged behind him on the neighbouring hillside Suddenly, at a signal from the King, the Christian soldiers turned upon the unhappy and helpless captives, and massacred them all in cold blood Even at such a moment as this Saladin did not forget his humane disposition and his princely character The proud Saladin disdained to sully his honour by making reprisals upon the unarmed prisoners at his side, he simply refused to give up the money or the cross, and sent the prisoners to Damascus Which was the Paynim and which the Christian then?"

feudal and tyrannic Europe the one source of substantial, concrete moral qualities. That *gran bontà de' cavalieri antichi* forced by the sheer moral superiority of the Moors upon the brigand nobility of Europe, became the sole redeeming ethical grace of Christendom, and the tradition has been handed down to our own day in the notion so dear to the English mind of a 'gentleman' Thus, shocking as the paradox may be to our traditional notions, it would probably be only strict truth to say that Muhâmmadan culture has contributed at least as largely to the actual, practical, concrete morality of Europe as many a more sublimated ethical doctrine

That 'refining,' humanizing influence which men have always ascribed to culture is not a mystic, obscure, and vague effect of elegant taste and æsthetic effeminacy, but the direct and inevitable result of intelligence, knowledge, and rationality of thought, upon the foundations of all ethical estimates Where people are ignorant, uncritical, and irrational, they are unjust, cruel, ready to perpetrate and to tolerate abuses of unscrupulous and unchecked power Those abuses, those injustices, those cruelties become, when their minds are enlightened, as intolerable and impossible to accept as the puerile conceptions and crude world-theories of the barbarian and the savage

III

'CORRUPTION'

But some phases of highly developed culture, it is objected, have been profoundly immoral Decadent Rome and the Italian Renaissance are consecrated

instances which flash before the mind. Those phenomena, when analysed, illustrate the law which they appear to infringe. The immorality, the violence, the unscrupulousness, which are adverted to in such epochs, were the effect of great power and wealth in ruling classes, which, while commanding the fruits of culture and pressing them into the service of their self-indulgence and luxury, were nowise associated with its creative impulse or with any form of its progressive activity. That corruption was the effect of power, not of intellectual growth. That which offends us in those periods is to be met with not among the Senecas or Leonardos, but in the surfeited master classes which had reached the limit of power to indulge their passions and appetites in Imperial and in Papal Rome. It was the product not of growing culture, but of the culmination of personal power in the Empire and in the Papacy

The phenomenon of cultured depravity is a characteristic of periods of transition Culture, intellectual development, greatly increase the means of power, of gratification and self-indulgence in power-holders They supply them with extended means of pleasure, luxury and display. Hence that result takes place whenever a class possessing great power and wealth coexists with a condition of high culture which it did not produce a situation which, as we have seen, is invariably one of unstable equilibrium That culture may be, as with Rome, the legacy of a former period of intellectual activity, or, as in the Renaissance, the firstfruit of new circumstances leading to an influx of culture It is never associated with actual intellectual activity in the morally corrupt class

Somewhat the same situation has recurred in various periods, in France before the Revolution, for instance, when modern culture was bursting through her seed-coverings, but feudalism, though doomed, was still in full vigour Even to-day something of the same phenomenon may be seen in the unintellectual wealthy classes (affording an opportunity for preachers to dwell on the 'materialism of the age') To a large extent

it constitutes that corrupting influence which is commonly ascribed to civilization. Wherever that phenomenon manifests itself we find the real intellectual element, whatever may be its relation to the ruling class, in actual opposition to it, working out its downfall And the corruption is painted to us in vivid colours because it is painted by the hand of the indignant intellectual class which in the Renaissance is as loud in its impeachment of 'avaricious Babylon,' as Juvenal in his denunciation of the dissolute plutocracy of his day, as the French philosopher in his indictment of Versailles morality, or the modern socialist in his accusation of the 'idle rich' The forces of which corrupt ruling classes avail themselves to enhance the opulence of their orgies of power, are those which are about to overwhelm them It is largely *because* of the vigour of the forces of moral protest in periods of high culture, that all their abuses and corruptions stand pilloried in the fierce light of denunciation

The evil itself is necessarily a very limited and partial phenomenon, a particular point of view which may without difficulty be brought into focus in almost any period As Professor Dill remarks, it would be easy for any satirical writer of our own day to match every single denunciation of Juvenal

The consecrated conception of Roman corruption, traditionally cultivated as an essential part of our scheme of history, is by now fit for circulation only among the uninformed The popular fancy picture of the Roman world filled with Neronian orgies which serve as a lurid background for the figures of Christian martyrs, might indeed without any historical knowledge be sufficiently discredited by its own inherent inconsistency For who, pray, were those Christian martyrs, those saintly bishops, those noble women, those Clements, those Cecilias, those Laterani? Were *they* not Romans? Was it from a soil putrid with moral corruption that their moral enthusiasm and fervour fructified?

The whole notion of 'corruption' has originated with Roman writers themselves What they meant by 'corruption' was any departure from the Spartan

simplicity of life of the old peasant community. "Among the examples which they think most scandalous," says Ferrero, "are many which to us appear innocent enough, as, for instance, the importation from Pontus of certain sausages and salt fish which were, it seems, excellent to eat, the introduction from Greece into Italy of the art of battening fowl Even the drinking of Greek wines was during many centuries considered a luxury to be indulged in only on the most solemn occasions In 18 B C Augustus got a sumptuary law passed which made it illegal to spend more than two hundred sestercia (about two pounds) on a banquet on ordinary days, three hundred sestercia (three pounds) on Calend and Ide days, and one thousand (ten pounds) for wedding dinners Even allowing for the difference in the value of money, the masters of the world feasted at a cost which we should consider absurdly moderate

Silk was looked upon askance even in the most opulent periods of the empire, as a luxury of questionable taste because it showed off too prominently the lines of the body Lollia Paulina's name has been handed down because she owned so many jewels that their value amounted to some four thousand pounds There are so many Lollia Paulinas to-day that none can buy immortality at so small a cost The boon companions of Nero and Eliogabalus would be dazzled if they could come back to life in any of the large hotels of Paris, London, or New York They had seen more beautiful things, but never such reckless luxury Rome, even at the height of her splendour was poor compared with our cities There were far fewer theatres and amusements Many vices which are widely diffused to-day were unknown to the ancients; they knew few wines, they had no alcohol, no tea, no coffee, no tobacco They were ever Spartans compared to us, even when they thought they were indulging themselves The Romans considered it quite an ordinary precaution to keep a watch on the individual citizen within the walls of his home, to see that he did not get drunk, or eat too much, or incur debts, or spend too much, or covet his neighbour's wife. In the age

of Augustus exile and confiscation of a third of their property was the penalty imposed on Roman citizens, men or women, for adultery, and any one was free to bring a charge against the delinquents The law remained in force for centuries "

Idle, ignorant rich, and insane autocrats were in a state of moral dissolution in Imperial Rome as they have been everywhere and in all ages, but though the annals of every country can furnish Neros and Domitians in abundance, how many can parallel the figures of such rulers as Trajan or Marcus Aurelius? As we have already had occasion to note, Roman civilization, which by a strange and pathetic irony has been branded in the popular imagination as the example of moral corruption, was on the contrary for nothing more notable than as the period of most active ethical enthusiasm and moral development in the history of the world, and the outstanding legacy of Roman genius to humanity has been one of moral aspiration and redemption

I have said enough about the character of the Italian Renaissance to show that it had in it more of corruption than of real culture In its social aspect it marked the pouncing of beasts of prey upon the material and intellectual heritage of the race, and if it coincided also with developments of the first moment for human evolution, it is because there was also initiated then the fiercest round of the struggle in which mankind has striven to wrest that heritage from her despoilers It need, therefore, nowise surprise us that that period should be for utter moral corruption, unscrupulousness, and brutal selfishness without a parallel in human annals, and that the patrons of that false, vain, and insincere culture, should have been a Leo X, an Alexander VI, a Cæsar Borgia, a Lodovico Sforza, a Lorenzo the Magnificent, protector of the arts, author of elegant and vile *Canti Carnascialeschi*, sacker of Volterra, despoiler of orphans, murderer, traitor, and tyrant [1]

[1] Lorenzo has, I am aware, been duly whitewashed by sundry recent authors, their evidences are unconvincing

One character by which perhaps the Italian Renaissance exercises most fascination, by contrast with the tinsel artificiality of its intellectual fruits, is the very boldness and naturalness of its depravity, its unashamed individualistic animality, its undisguised rascality disdainful of reticence and hypocrisies, which so congenially blended with the more sensuous aspects of the pagan spirit. And we find a certain charm in the swash-buckler blackguardism of a Cellini, and in the world of gilded ruffianism which he so ingenuously reflected That aspect at least was unmincingly sincere

CHAPTER IV

THE GUILT OF OPINIONS

I

DILEMMA OF AMBULATORY MORALITY

THE ineptitude of the so-called sciences of ethics which occupy our academic chairs, stammering forth their feeble dogmatisms in apologetic consciousness of their invalidity, reaches its *reductio ad absurdum* when our principles of moral philosophy are confronted with the task of passing judgment upon history

In considering the criminal acts of unenlightened ages—Richard I, say, putting out the eyes of fifteen French knights, or James I suggesting refinements of torture to extract confessions of witchcraft—we remark that those worthies would not have behaved as they did, had they lived at the present day, the turpitude of their acts was not an attribute of their personal depravity, but of the age they lived in Whatever perversity they may have naturally possessed would, in our own day, have taken a different and less outrageous form, the atrocities which they committed are to be set down to the nature of the views, customs, and opinions current in their day Lion-hearted Richard would, had he lived to-day, have proved himself a very gallant gentleman, his breast would have been resplendent with many well-earned decorations, and he would scarcely have controlled the exuberance of his indignation while reading of German atrocities in his morning paper and of the dastardly treatment of our prisoners in German camps The most high and mighty prince James, by the grace of

God defender of the faith, would have been a pillar of the Establishment and a zealous supporter of religious education, but he would not have hammered nails in John Fian's finger-tips. The *mores*, the public opinion of Plantagenet England were perfectly accustomed to worse Norman atrocities than King Richard's : a Norman king or baron who did not devise some egregious cruelty or treachery would have been an object of amazement, and King Philip Augustus of France was nothing loath to retaliate by treating fifteen English knights in the same manner as Richard had treated the French Public opinion in England in the sixteenth century quite approved of torturing persons suspected of witchcraft

Yet while we are thus accustomed to set down the atrocities and revolting moral judgments of men in the past to the barbarism and ignorance of the current opinions of their day, we at the same time continue to profess the dogma that moral good and moral evil are intimate personal attributes of individual 'character,' and to regard opinions and intellectual judgments as wholly outside the sphere of moral values The two views stand, of course, in as flat contradiction to one another as is possible They are the *reductio ad absurdum* of the principles which govern our moral judgments If in one age the grossest iniquities were committed by men who would certainly not have perpetrated them had they lived in another age, the attribute of moral 'badness' belongs not at all to their personal character, but to their opinions If Sir Thomas Browne, who picturesquely set his face against 'ambulatory morality,' and Sir Matthew Hale, no less fluent in ethical theorizing, could assist in convicting old women of witchcraft, if Shakespeare could callously countenance the pillorying of the memory of Joan of Arc, it was not Sir Thomas Browne, Sir Matthew Hale, and Shakespeare who were morally perverse, but the irrational current opinions which they accepted It was not bad men who burned women alive, but the Christianity of the sixteenth century

You cannot have it both ways. Either the conscientious intention is bad or the opinion which justifies it, either Sir Thomas Browne was immoral or the verse of Exodus

and the ignorance which accepted its authority, either evil-doers are morally reprehensible, and no generally accepted opinion can be morally condemned, or the stigma of moral goodness and badness attaches to those opinions and not to the men who act upon them.

Our current ethics are here reduced to impotent titubation.

On the one hand our ethical theories justify as blameless all conduct which proceeds from good intentions, a good conscience, steadfast principles Our traditional moral estimates are concerned with 'judging' actions with reference to punishment or reward A bad action in terms of those notions, means a *punishable action* And the chief, the only relevant considerations in an assessment of punishment or reward—or their equivalent, blame or praise—are the motives of the individual, his conscience, his responsibility, his intentions

The current doctrine, on the other hand, is that opinions are ethically irrelevant, that whatever their nature, provided only they be sincere, they are entitled to respect, that they are private personal concerns for which the holder is not answerable to any man, that, pertaining as they do to the domain of the intellect, they lie entirely outside that of morality, and that no stigma of moral reprobation can attach to any opinion as such, which is held in good faith

II

CURRENT OPINION ON OPINIONS

At one time, when rationally irresponsible dogma and authority were claimed to be the foundations of belief, the

directly opposite doctrine was held. The grossest evils from which the European world has suffered, have been the results of attempts to put down opinions which were regarded as wicked and immoral. The enormities of dogmatic intolerance produced a revolt to which it was found expedient to yield. The reverse doctrine thus received tacit assent—that all opinions are equally entitled to respect and consideration. In other words, when it was found no longer possible to enforce the standard of arbitrary authority superior to reason, the assumption was encouraged that no definite standard of right opinion exists. It was thus possible to elude the necessity of recognizing the real standard of valid opinion—rational thought, and intellectual honesty. The tyrannical mediæval doctrine of intolerance and the modern illogical doctrine of tolerance, are at one in refusing to acknowledge rational thought as the sole valid sanction of opinion Irrational authority, having lost the power of effectually exercising intolerance, claimed the benefits of tolerance ; finding it impossible to maintain the absolute supremacy and universal recognition of irrational sanctions, it secured the best terms of surrender, by obtaining for them equality of status with rational sanctions. But it did more than secure the acceptance of the outrageous doctrine that irrational opinions have exactly the same moral status as rational opinions Since the supporters of irrational authority had treated the opinions of their opponents as morally reprehensible, it came to be professed that no opinions are morally reprehensible , thus the alternative inference was eluded, that irrational opinions are themselves morally reprehensible

Thus it is that the modern attitude towards opinions has arisen. Rational and irrational opinions being exactly on the same footing, no standard of valid opinion, no standard of intellectual ethics, no standard of right judgment is recognized Opinions are sacred and inviolable individual rights. Their sanctity is as jealously protected as that of property The grossest irrationality is secure in that protection. Every folly and patent idiocy can claim the same 'respect' as the most stringent

rational conclusion The baby-farmer is sent to gaol, but the 'Christian Scientist' is entitled to consideration and even protection for his 'honest' opinions It would be heinous to dispute his right to propagate them and to impose them upon tender children If any one should venture to raise a doubt about the right to inflict deliberate and irremediable deformation on the defenceless mind of a child, to instil irrational prejudices, to teach falsehoods, to cripple effectually and completely his rational powers, to poison the sources of judgment, to rob him of his human heritage—such a suggestion would raise a storm of righteous indignation, the cry would go up from the successors of the Inquisitors and High Commissioners that the sacred rights of conscience are being challenged, that it is sought to bring back the days of persecution and intolerance, that liberty, freedom of teaching, the most indefeasible rights of the subject are being menaced and violated It would be as scandalous to dispute that the parent has as absolute a right to strangle a child's mind as it would formerly have been to dispute his right to strangle his body To interfere at all with conscientious opinion is rather worse than bad taste All sincere opinions are 'honest' While their truth or falsehood may under proper circumstances be debated, to apply moral judgments to them is itself a turpitude, and a violation of the canons of debate Hence opinions have come to be regarded as really of little or no ethical importance, they are abstracted as adventitious and irrelevant Morally speaking we have to do with good or bad men, not with opinions. To insist on taking opinions too seriously is a mark of vulgar narrowness and intolerance Wrong must not be tolerated, but every opinion has a sacred right to be tolerated That anarchy of tolerance is necessarily extended to our historical judgments, we can only bestow praise or blame on 'good' or 'bad' men, opinions are morally neutral

III

THE WICKEDNESS OF THE 'GOOD'

But, as a matter of fact, the good and the bad in human history have not at all proceeded from the 'goodness' or 'badness' of men, but from their views and opinions. The men who have inflicted the worst calamities upon the human race, opposed its welfare by every means in their power, obstructed its advance, betrayed its destinies, drenched the world in blood, oppressed it with injustice, the foes of humanity, have not been men of bad intentions—bad men; they have been purely and simply men who have held wrong, that is, irrational opinions. Far from desiring to inflict injury, they have for the most part been actuated by a sincere and disinterested sense of duty towards mankind. Torquemada, who died "in the conviction that he had given his best—indeed, his all—to the service of God," was a 'good man', he loved humanity, he was animated, not by any personal and selfish motives, but by a perfervid sense of duty. he roasted alive ten thousand men and women with the sincere purpose of benefiting them and the human race—and quite consistently. Calvin, who murdered Servetus under circumstances of aggravated treachery and atrocity, and John Knox, who demanded the slaughter of every Catholic in Scotland, were men whose whole lives were dedicated to a paramount ethical ideal. Charles V, who decreed that every heretic should be beheaded, burned, or buried alive, and who put from fifty to a hundred thousand people to death in Holland alone, had as his supreme object the maintenance of true religion, and was "clement beyond example."

Read the expressions of Roman Catholic opinion in instigation and in praise of the massacres of the Huguenots, the pæans of exultation over the glorious and meritorious deed, the pious hopes that it might prove but the beginning of more extensive butcheries, and mark the awakening of Christian princes to a sense

l duty Those men spoke like
iction, their language is that of
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ading article in *The Times* We
derers, infamous monsters, but
sight pre-eminently virtuous The
l celebrating a *Te Deum* over
is suffused with as much righteous
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eudalism were inspired by what
ost noble and sacred ideals Read
what light their hideous cause
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t the liberation of humanity from
elty and injustice Their romantic
ed with heroic inspiration, ready
o bring back the rack and the
sery, famine, and spoliation, ready
;'

oppressors, the kings, the priests,
actionaries of all ages, who have
an growth, to maintain the ugly
, who have upheld and perpetrated
mination, have had in their minds
and on their lips the words which
sacred—truth, religion, morals,
the things which they fought tooth
language the ugliest names—error,
loyalty, treason, infidelity, anarchy,
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in the Newgate Calendar of history are associated with good intentions and conscientious purposes. It is 'good' men who have always been the true evil-doers, the most pernicious and dangerous foes of the race, and the blackest traitors to its highest and most vital interests. And the evil which they have wrought when they have acted as the organs of wrong opinions, has been in exact proportion to their 'goodness,' to their zeal, sincerity and conscientiousness.

The hell of human suffering, evil, and oppression is paved with good intentions The men who have most injured and oppressed humanity, who have most deeply sinned against it, were, according to their standards and their conscience, good men , what was bad in them, what wrought moral evil and cruelty, treason to truth and progress, was not at all in their intentions, in their purpose, in their personal character, but in their opinions

The plain truth is that views and opinions are the only ethically significant, the only moral and immoral things It is not what men do, knowing and judging it to be bad and wicked, but what they do considering it to be highly moral, conscientiously believing it to be good, which is answerable for by far the largest measure of the wrongdoing and injustice in the world The calamities which have afflicted the human race, the crimes of history, do not arise from malignant intentions, but from excellent and erroneous intentions. The true police function of morality should be not to restrain bad men, but to restrain good men The 'wicked man' of the Nicomachean ethics who 'calmly does wrong,' who habitually and systematically does what he apprehends to be wrong, is a rare monster He is either a miserable weakling or a pathological pervert He is exceptional Conscious, intentional and self-condemned iniquity is as a drop in the ocean of conscientious, approved iniquity.

And moral wrong is conscientious and approved because it rests upon wrong opinions.

The moral reformer who attacks a glaring injustice and perversion of the moral sense invariably finds that his real adversary is not at all a false sentiment or a

deformed feeling, but an irrational falsehood about a four-square matter of fact. He denounces persons for wickedness, injustice, and finds, to his embarrassment, that they are in their intentions neither wicked nor unjust, that they believe themselves to be in the right, and that the real tyrant, the real evil-doer is some opinion, some intellectual absurdity which justifies them in their own eyes.

Strictly speaking, opinions are the only indictable offences. And they are culpable to the extent that they are irrational. There is not a false opinion, an error, however theoretical it may appear, which is not chargeable with moral evil, with injustice in its consequences

What, for instance, seemingly more inoffensive, nay, almost amiable form of idiocy than that of a saintly, devout little Catholic lady whose feminine emotionalism finds its outlet in passionate indulgence in the mysticisms and rites of her religion? What fanatical rationalist would be so vulgarly tactless as to offend the feelings of the poor, sweet lady who spends the surplus of her treasures of tender emotion in sacrifice and good work? But give that inoffensive little lady power, set her on a throne, and you have Isabel and the Spanish Inquisition, Bloody Mary and the English Inquisition, Madame de Maintenon and the Revocation of the Edict, the dragonnades and the ruin of a kingdom[1] Inoffensive! No lie in this world can manage to be inoffensive No lie and no error whatever If it has power it will be bloody and murderous

We are prone to think of intellectual inquiry, of the pursuit of truth, as amiable forms of curiosity But in point of fact there is not an error that has not shed blood, not a false opinion that has not been a breeder of injustice. And every freedom and immunity from

[1] It is now customary to state that Madame de Maintenon had nothing to do with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes If we bear in mind the character of her influence on Louis XIV, the King's suspiciousness of being in any way led by others, the clever tactfulness of his wife in guiding him without ever appearing to do so, and the evolution of his fanaticism from his "conversion" onward under her influence, we can have little doubt as to whence his religious policy emanated

wrong which we enjoy is the fruit of some intellectual truth. The supposed line of demarcation between the intellectual and the moral is a fiction. It is to intellectual products that moral values are applicable.

That is true of individual opinions, but it is even more momentously and tragically true of those opinions which are widely prevalent, which constitute the established standards of a people, of an epoch, or of a party, which constitute 'public opinion' Morality, *mores*, is custom, in the sense that it is dependent upon the nature of acknowledged and current opinions Individual 'goodness,' good intention, deliberate righteousness, a good conscience, simply mean conformity with the constituted opinions and views of the age And the constituted opinions of various ages have countenanced and supported every crime under the sun. If those opinions be bad, unjust, irrational, no degree of conscientiousness, of well-meaning and enthusiasm for virtue, can make an individual's conduct and attitude moral.

There are at all times evil-doers who stand condemned by the accepted standards of their age—how far their immorality is the effect of the irrational provisions and arrangements of the age, of its injustice, is another question But the ethical measure of evil resulting from that immorality, is as nothing by comparison with that which is inherent in the accepted and approved opinions of the age

It is public morality, public opinion, accepted views and beliefs, approved standards of judgment, and not at all individual character and malignant intentions which are responsible for overwhelming the world with blood and injustice Those are the real culprits, those are the criminals, those are the actual malefactors. The immorality which has afflicted humanity is not a matter of sentiments, of broken commandments, of moral insensibility, it resolves itself into intellectual ignorance, into irrationality which renders possible the uncritical foundations of wrong. It is in that supposedly 'intellectual field that the real moral reform takes place; progress in morality takes place through the overthrow of some view or theory which in itself is regarded as having

nothing to do with morality We are not under the influence of a higher ethical code than our forefathers, we are not animated by a more intense and loftier moral purpose than Sir Thomas Browne, or Melanchthon, or John Calvin, but the field of rational thought has enlarged If Dominicans no longer burn heretics, judges no longer use the 'question,' tyrants no longer exercise fantastic forms of oppression, it is not because we have received some sublime moral enlightenment Our morality has improved because our intellectual development and rationality have advanced

IV

OUR TRIVIAL ESTIMATE OF UNPARDONABLE SIN

The anarchy of our ethics, the stultification of our moral judgments, which renders possible the glorification of scoundrels by historians, of Frederick II, for example, by Carlyle, of Henry VIII by Froude, is most crucially exposed when the delinquent is so merely through the natural consequence of opinions to which even to this day no definite moral stigma is held to attach

Take as an illustration the case of Queen Marie Antoinette She was a woman of considerable charm, and the weakness of her personal character, that she was appallingly ignorant and frivolous, that those entrusted with her education were compelled to give up the task in despair, that she could never read any book except the most trashy novels, which she took with her to church bound as prayer-books to while the tedium of the service, that she was vain and pleasure-loving—were no more

than the ordinary faults common
women of her day and ours. In
the looseness of its sexual moralit
decidedly above the average, and al
been expected of her. Though sc
lently busy with her name, the de
nature of most of its allegations
slight hold which her conduct gave
Lauzun and Fersen were possibly h
is by no means established In
proved a devoted wife and a goo
nothing in the weaknesses of her
detract from the tragic pity of he
to scaffold, or that can lessen the
sufferings which she bore with d
naturally excite

But if we judge the Queen by the
in the events amid which her lot w
other ground is any historical judgm
—our view must closely coincide w
tives of the French Republicans
autrichienne' She was the soul
forces arrayed against that Revol
greatest and most fertile impulse of
tion, and emancipation in the career
source of all that mankind has won
in the last century She was vowed
and hostility against it, and in order
it every means appeared justified
encouraged the King to break his pl
his desertion to the enemies of hi
mittingly urged and incited those
country which she represented and
which her people had won, she
every information and assistance, sl
of France on which she could lay
chests of Austria and Prussia. F
treasons any individual would, acc
codes, be summarily shot If the wo
iron safe is to be believed, she did
with her own hand Even that wa

by the purposes of the absolutist cause. If ever Fran
had an enemy it was she, if ever the most vital ar
paramount issues of the evolution of the human race ha
a truceless and uncompromising opponent it was sh

Can anything be more pathetic than the bewilder
helplessness of our so-called ethical principles wh
applied to such cases? We are supposed to possess
perfectly clear notion of the distinction between right ar
wrong, yet when we are called upon to pass judgment c
one who devoted herself to the defence of wrong and tl
defeat of right, our ethical assessment is virtually allow
to be as purely a matter of individual taste as the appr
ciation of an Indian curry There is nothing in o
standards to exclude the canonization of Marie Antoinet
as a saint and martyr. After all, say our historians, sl
was only a foolish woman, any aristocratic Primro
Dame of to-day would, placed in identical circumstance
have acted exactly as she did Her attitude and condu
were the natural outcome of views which she regarded
superlatively moral Exactly the same plea can be a
vanced to justify Torquemada, Mary Tudor, the Guis
William Hohenzollern, and every self-righteous scoundr
in history.

We have not by any means yet left behind us tl
grossness of immoral opinions We have our approv
and accepted opinions which breed iniquity as inevitab
as Sir Thomas Browne's or King James's opinions
witchcraft

The inquisitor and the tyrant, the block, the stak
and the torture-chamber are melodramatic enormiti
which to us have become so remote that we almo
fail to think of them as ever having been terribly re
actualities, they have become semi-fabulous, almo
ridiculous in their grossness, like ogres and werewolv
and reference to such obsolete horrors is apt to lea
us somewhat cold But the psychological and logic
relation is precisely the same in regard to wh
we consider debatable points of present actualities, mo
views and opinions in the actual order of the worl
The tyrant and the inquisitor have changed their nam
and callings, they wield less sensational weapons, b

they are still with us, standing in the same relation as of yore to the cause of human destinies.

And the same is true of the moral issues at stake in the present world, and of men's attitude and conduct in regard to them as of the most violent actions. The determining factors of constituted immorality in the ages of darkest tyranny are the same which operate to-day in apparently—but only apparently—more innocuous forms. We have amongst us the same delusions of gross immorality believing itself conscientiously moral as in the days of inquisitions and witch-hunts

Murder and torture, however validated and sanctified by existing opinion, are unmistakably recognized as evil when those opinions have lost their force But other evils may be inflicted on humanity besides homicide and gross instant tyranny Lord Acton, seeking a fixed standard of historical moral judgment, made homicide the criterion But if we look at human affairs from the point of view of the actual natural laws which govern them, even human life is not the most important consideration Even the sacrifice of many human lives is not so great an evil as the setting back of the course of evolution for centuries The ends of the great process manifested in the development of humanity, the fulfilment of its destinies, the compassing of justice, are objects even more sacred than human life. Individuals are willing to sacrifice life for those things, the race does not hesitate to cast away lives in thousands, in millions, to sacrifice a whole generation for the sake of those objects. Humanity, which has been bleeding to death, would think its blood well spent if the goal of its efforts were thereby brought nearer, if the world were made substantially better by the sacrifice

Yet a man may stand in open and avowed opposition to those issues more sacred than human life itself without in the least degree forfeiting his moral character The one truly unpardonable sin, impiety, treason against the one supreme Divine Fact and purpose we know, is a matter of respectable difference of opinion, of politics, of creed, of expediency, of what you will, but not a matter of morality

We do not burn people alive, we have no Torquemadas or Ezzelins among us to-day But in the code of natural moral values there are blacker crimes than homicide. The benevolent old gentleman with whom you dined last night is intent on frustrating Human Evolution, on circumventing and defeating the Purpose of the race. The villains in the Divine Comedy of humanity are such benevolent old gentlemen

The conflict and struggle of which human good and human progress have been the outcome, and which is daily being waged for the same objects, is not a battle against men, but against opinions It is not recognized immorality which needs to be combated, but recognized morality Not what is known as wrong, but what passes for right And the foundation of that immorality and of that wrong is a structure reared not by reason, but by power-thought The task of the forces of moral progress is an intellectual one, it does not call so much for greater purity of purpose, as for more critical intellectual rectitude

CHAPTER V

MORALS AND BELIEF

I

MORALS AS COMFORT

ETHICAL thought suffered early from a radical confusion which almost completely stultified its operation, and that confusion still obtains It became stultified and sterilized when its point of view became shifted from humanity to man, from human relations in general, their significance as a social question, to the exclusive consideration of personal and individual character When the Greek thinkers in the first flush and bloom of their enthusiasm for rational thought began to consider the question of right conduct, their first notion was justice, their first ideal the just man Afterwards, when in the Mediterranean world Greek rationalism became diluted, adulterated, and ultimately swamped by the influences of the Orient, that ideal became changed, under the Stoics and Epicureans into that of the *wise* man, wise, that is, in contriving to arm and protect himself by mental fences against the hardships and sufferings of life The two actual religions of the cultivated Roman and Hellenic world, Stoicism and Epicureanism, had alike for their aim, not the regulation of the relations between man and man, but the formation of individual character in such a way that the individual might himself enjoy a comparative degree of immunity from the effects of the trials and vicissitudes of life, teaching him to make the best of things, *comforting* him They produced *animas naturaliter Christianas* The process was carried a step further, and the ideal of the current philosophical religions, the wise man, developed into that of the

Asiatic saint. The individual was further *comforted* Thus the original purpose of ethics, the only one which possesses any meaning, its *raison d'être,* the regulation of the relations between man and man, the elimination of wrong and the establishing of right, was entirely lost sight of and forgotten It ceased to be the business of ethical thought, and in its stead the condition of the individual mind, its peace and comfort, 'a good conscience,' good intentions, became substituted as the end-all of so-called morality As the 'just man' gave place to the saint, so for the notion of wrong and injustice was substituted that of sin, and thus mere equity, mere justice came almost to be thought of as an inferior order of moral good, and moral excellence came instead to be associated with the notion of certain exalted conditions of the feelings and emotions, and to be judged with reference rather to the state of the individual's mind than to the effects of his conduct

That transformation by Stoical and Epicurean thought of the original Greek conception of morality constitutes the most profound perversion which the ethical ideals of man have ever suffered Morality, right conduct between man and man, becomes destitute of significance if it does not result in the actual good of mankind It is shorn of its function That function is not the individual's own good, his salvation, though it is in reality the highest condition of that good, but his conduct, his relation to the vaster organism of which he is a part And of that actual moral relation the essence and foundation is justice

And justice is not an ethereal ideal, it is not a constructive conception, the created product of some sublime vision. It is simply the negation of wrong, of injustice. It demands that there shall be no despotic oppression, no arbitrary violence done by man to man, no gratuitous abuse and cruelty, that, in his life, his activity, his thought, man shall not be tyrannized over by man, by virtue of mere power, privilege, factitious and false authority Those things are *wrong*, purely and wholly wrong, in whatever light we look at them, so long as we attach any meaning whatever to the word

'wrong.' In demanding immunity from them, man demands only, as he puts it, his *right*. That right, although not founded on the sanction of any contract, not demonstrable by any legal formula, although, if you will, quite an arbitrary claim—regarded as a *claim*—constitutes the fundamental demand, the root and essence of the significance of morality. It is right, as distinguished from wrong The elimination of wrong is the irreducible minimum of morality. Whatever lofty superstructure of ideal ethical emotion be reared above that irreducible minimum, it counts for nothing so long as the primary essentials of right are not secured, so long as wrong is upheld Such a superstructure is not moral at all In order that a man or a society of men should have any claim to be regarded as moral, they must cease to do wrong It is of no avail that they should entertain sublime emotions, that they should live in a sustained ecstasis of exalted feeling, if they do not fulfil the primary condition of forgoing wrong-doing, of ceasing to be unjust.

Not only is the prime function of morality obscured and overshadowed by the personal and ascetic ideal, but a radically conflicting and opposite function becomes substituted for it. Not right, but renouncement is the ideal of Stoicism, not abstention from wrong, but the protection of the individual from the *effects* of wrong The object of morality is no longer to resist evil, but to submit to it; not to advance justice, but to bow to and ignore injustice The basal function of all morality becomes inverted, it actually behoves to 'resist *not* evil.' Through such a perversion the effect of ethical emotion, instead of being to promote the development of the race, comes to be the exact opposite It loses all concern for the human future, for the means of achievement, the efforts of progress. All those things it rejects and denounces as 'the world'; it comes to place its ideal precisely in the completeness of its detachment from all that which constitutes the evolutionary force and life of humanity It not only does not contribute to them, but despises them, resists abhors them

Thus it is that those epochs and those societies in which that ideal has been in the ascendant, in spite of any humanitarian character they may present, in spite of any austerity, have not only been phases of harshness and cruelty, but phases of stagnation in the course of human progress, and have promoted neither freedom nor justice

It is a reproach commonly urged against Christianity that throughout its history it has constantly associated itself with and supported power and oppression, that, except in those rare instances where the cause of the oppressed happened to coincide with the political interests of the Church, the power of the latter has been generally inefficiently exercised in the cause of freedom, in the liberation and uplifting of classes, in the rectification of intolerable wrongs, but has, on the contrary, been the consistent bulwark of privilege, despotism and established abuse The old claim that Christianity abolished slavery can now no longer be insisted on slavery in the ancient world disappeared owing to the failure of the supply, and Christianity had as little to do with the failure of the supply of slaves as it has to do at the present day with the failure of the supply of domestic servants It is not altogether fair to charge Christianity with the support of Divine Right, feudalism and all established powers and abuses Motives of policy influenced, not by the spirit of Christianity, but by human avarice and greed for power, the corruption of religious offices and ideals in hierarchical princes and powerful monks, not those ideals themselves, have been responsible for the part played by Christian Churches in opposing every manifestation of liberty and progress But, while that distinction should be duly borne in mind, it must nevertheless be admitted that that characteristic attitude has only been rendered possible because the idea of justice is necessarily thrust into the background by ascetic ideals.

My friend Dr Falta de Gracia, indeed, in his usual jaundiced and offensive manner goes even further "The notion of justice," says the famous Spanish

Professor, "is as entirely foreign to the spirit of Christianity as is that of intellectual honesty. It lies wholly outside the field of its ethical vision. Christianity—I am not referring to interpretations which may be disclaimed as corruptions or applications which may be set down to frailty and error, but to the most idealized conception of its substance and the most exalted manifestations of its spirit—Christianity has offered comfort and consolation to men who suffered under injustice, but of that injustice itself it has remained absolutely incognizant It has called upon the weary and heavy laden, upon the suffering and the afflicted, it has proclaimed to them the law of love, the duty of mercy and forgiveness, the Fatherhood of God, but in that torrent of religious and ethical emotion which has impressed men as the summit of the sublime, and been held to transcend all other ethical ideals, common justice, common honesty have no place. The ideal Christian, the saint, is seen descending like an angel from heaven amid the welter of human misery, among the victims of ruthless oppression and injustice, bringing to them the comfort and consolation of the Paraclete, of the Religion of Sorrow. But the cause of that misery lies wholly outside the range of his consciousness; no glimmer of any notion of right and wrong enters into his view of it It is the established order of things, the divinely appointed government of the world, the trial laid upon sinners by divine ordinance St Vincent de Paul visits the living hell of the French galleys, he proclaims the message of love and calls sinners to repentance; but to the iniquity which creates and maintains that hell, he remains absolutely indifferent He is appointed Grand-Almoner to His Most Christian Majesty The world might groan in misery under the despotism of oppressors, men's lives and men's minds might be enslaved, crushed and blighted; the spirit of Christianity would go forth and *comfort* them, but it would never occur to it to redress a single one of those wrongs. It has remained unconscious of them To those wrongs, to men's right to be delivered from them, it was by nature completely blind. In respect to justice, to right

and wrong, the spirit of Christianity is not so much immoral as amoral The notion was as alien to it as was the notion of truth Included in its code was, it might be controversially alleged, an old formula, 'the golden rule,' a commonplace of most literatures, which was popular in the East from China to Asia Minor, but that isolated precept was never interpreted in the sense of justice. It meant forgiveness, forbearing, kindness, but never mere justice, common equity, those virtues were far too unemotional in aspect to appeal to the religious enthusiast The renunciation of life and all its 'vanities,' the casting overboard of all sordid cares for its maintenance, the suppression of desire, prodigal almsgiving, the consecration of a life the value of which had disappeared in his eyes to charity and love, non-resistance, passive obedience, the turning of the other cheek to an enemy, the whole riot of those hyperbolic ethical emotions could fire the Christian consciousness, while it remained utterly unmoved by every form of wrong, iniquity and injustice"

To such intolerable and unbeseeming exaggerations does the fundamental difference between all Stoical, ascetic, personal and individual misconceptions of moral ends, and the natural function of morality in human development lend specious colour

In one of his most charming essays Matthew Arnold enlarges upon that favourite contrast between 'paganism' regarded as the religion of joy, and Christianity as the religion of sorrow The point of his argument is that, since there is an enormous amount of suffering in the world, since "for the mass of mankind life is full of hardship," the religion of sorrow finds a much wider application than the religion of joy But of that suffering, of that hardship with which the life of the mass of mankind is full, nine-tenths is the direct product of perpetrated injustice, of conduct which is wrong and immoral precisely because it produces that suffering and hardship And morality, I repeat, is concerned first of all, if it has any meaning at all, with right and wrong Comfort and consolation are admirable and blessed things, though it may be questioned

how far delusive comfort is ultimately beneficial or false consolation expedient—but they are not morality. They are not morality especially while the question of right and wrong is entirely set aside and discarded Comfort and consolation, forgiveness and loving-kindness, admirable though they be, no more constitute morality than do the opiates and narcotics sometimes administered to the victims of the Holy Office before they were stretched on the rack or sent to the stake. By all means let us have comfort and loving-kindness and mercy, but let us have justice first, let us have right

The failure so unfortunately charged against Christianity to discriminate between established wrong and manifest right is not wholly unconnected with an incapacity it has sometimes shown of discerning between error and truth Unconsciousness of right and wrong, of justice, of the elementary moral values, is the inevitable correlative of unconsciousness of intellectual values.

The two things, intellectual honesty and justice, are in fact directly connected, two aspects of one and the same mental quality The feeling for truth and the feeling for right, the judicial attitude towards human relations and the judicial attitude towards facts and intellectual relations, are but the same condition of the mind under slightly different aspects. It is impossible for the man who is destitute of the sense of intellectual honesty, who can palter with facts, circumvent his own reason, deliberately put out his mind's eye, blink at the data of truth, manufacture and manipulate evidence, for the self-deceiver, for him who is insusceptible to the morality of truth and falsehood, to perceive aught of the distinction between right and wrong, between justice and injustice His judgment on the moral plane is inevitably the same as his judgment on the intellectual plane. Moral rectitude is incompatible with intellectual obliquity.

In the low state of moral development in which the notion of honesty of thought is unknown, honesty

in the relations of man to man is also unperceivable; justice, the rudiments of morality are unapprehensible. Honesty of thought, honesty of moral judgment—the two issues, that which we call intellectual and that which we call moral, are inextricably united, are, in reality inseparable

II

THE MISOLOGICAL FALLACY

Lurking at the root of the misconception which entirely severs moral conduct from intellect and reason, is a psychological confusion of thought of wider import than even the present question, for it involves our whole estimate of the position and significance of rational thought And it is the more pernicious because it contains a nucleus of truth

Strictly speaking all conduct, all action, arises out of desire, feeling, and their concomitant emotion Thought, whether rational or not, can of itself supply no motive of action, but only furnish the means of attaining an end which is given by extra-rational desire Whatever line of action be adopted, there is an ultimate end assumed in it which lies outside the sphere of the intellect and of rational thought If I take up my hat and umbrella, my act is rational because it is my wish to go out, if I take a conveyance to the city, the fact that I have a business appointment to keep affords a rational justification of my behaviour But if at last you ask me the reason why I should attend to business, I can only answer that I must live, and the strict logician is entitled to say, with a far better right than the finance-minister of the anecdote, "I fail to see

where the necessity comes in" And no matter what course of action we investigate, we sooner or later come up against the blind wall of an ultimate motive which is extra-rational

The operation of rational thought is entirely confined to its informing function, the reaction of the organism to the environment thus perceived depends upon the emotional colouring, the desire, which the perception evokes So that conduct can only be strictly described as rational or irrational in so far as it employs means appropriate or inappropriate to the attainment of an extra-rational object Thus it is that the nature of conduct is quite correctly liable to be viewed as a matter of feeling, of appetite, of sentiment, and quite outside the sphere of rational processes

But the contrast is in reality illusory. For the nature of motives, of desires, of sentiments, is wholly determined by the range of the perceptions of the individual, of the impression which he has of his relations to the environment If I start at the sight of a lion, my actual motive is an extra-rational instinct of self-preservation, but in order that it should operate I must first realize the nature of the danger If what I took to be a lion is only a poodle, my absurd behaviour is not the result of perverted instinct, but of inaccurate perception It is the nature of a man's impression of the world about him which determines the play of motive A man's conduct depends upon extra-rational instinct, emotions, desires, but these are themselves in turn determined by his view, his estimate of the world he lives in, by his beliefs, his opinions

And that impression, the range and complexion of his perception, is a matter of intellectual development, of knowledge What the world is to him, what determines his appetites and desires is the product of his intellectual reach and outlook.

The gigantic fallacy that pain and pleasure are the simple ultimate determinants of all conduct, that fallacy which has dominated both popular and philosophical theories, is the sheerest confusion of thought That we endeavour to do what we like and avoid doing what

we dislike is mere tautology But conducts differ because likes and dislikes differ, the determinant of variety of conduct is not the common factor of likes and dislikes, but that which differentiates likes and dislikes. The hog desires hog's wash, the thinker is ready to surrender all to the power of an idea Both are governed by desire for 'pleasure,' only the 'pleasure' differs in each case That of the hog would not be pleasure to Giordano Bruno, that of Bruno is incomprehensible to the unthinking philistine The man who has felt what it is to live in the glow of a great and absorbing idea, to be worn in the service of it, to feel his being identified with the creative forces which shape the world, declares that that alone is life, that the happiness of it, even though it entail bitterness of struggle, of obloquy, and even death, is not to be exchanged for anything that life can offer 'Well!' it may be asked, 'is he really happier than the hog?' The question is an absolutely idle and absurd one There is no means or method of instituting a comparison of the *quantity* of happiness obtained by the hog or the thinker

The interminable discussion on pleasure and pain, happiness and suffering as motives of action are futile reasonings in a circle Pleasure and happiness are the aims of all conduct, but precisely because they are the common aims of *all* conduct they are entirely irrelevant in discriminating one course of conduct from another The common factor may be altogether neglected without the result being thereby affected It is the kind of happiness, or satisfaction, the nature of the thing desired which constitutes the differentiating issue between one type of conduct and another And that difference depends upon the way in which the individual's relation to the outer world presents itself, it depends upon his perception, upon his conception, upon his thought, upon his knowledge The degree of adaptation of the means of perceiving those relations does in fact determine the desires and motives which actuate him So that rational thought, which owes its existence to that need, and whose function it is to

carry to its most efficient degree that perception, does determine the individual's reaction, his conduct. The more perfect the perception, the *truer* the belief, the more perfect the desire, the more adapted the conduct. Conduct depends upon desire, feeling, emotion, but desire, feeling, emotion depend in turn upon the nature of the perception

The old discredited notion of mediæval Christianity that the supremely important fact about a man was what he *believed*, that according as that belief, that creed, that opinion was true or false, he himself was to be counted good or bad, that his moral worth, his conduct were but the outward reflection of his intellectual attitude, that notion that has come to be branded as infamous and abhorrent was, as a matter of fact, strictly and incontrovertibly correct Only the incongruity and inconsistency of the historical situation, which brought about the advocacy and special pleadings of Locke, Bayle, Voltaire for the 'toleration' of freedom, the 'toleration' of rationality of thought, and reduced the values and foundations of all opinions to the same level, abolishing all distinctions of validity and invalidity, legitimacy or illegitimacy, right or wrong, thus giving rise to that outrageous and intolerable modern tolerance which regards every opinion as equally respectable, could divest intellectual belief of moral value and significance

III

RATIONAL THOUGHT AND NIHILISM

There is a strange irony in the circumstance that those who most indignantly reject as a degradation of

the moral ideal any dependence of morality on rational thought, are precisely those who complain that the foundations of morality are being sapped by rational criticism What they mean when they say that the foundations of morality are sapped, is that the motive of reward, the motive of future life, is destroyed , and that, consequently, morality can no longer be rationalized into a formula of self-interest, but is reduced to the emotional response of the human mind to the perception of facts as they are, to pure detached morality To do that is to sap the foundations of morality, of morality which is not to be rationalized, but is a spiritual emotion Self-contradictory inconsistency could hardly go further

And yet I would not be too hard on those inconsistent ones. There is a germ of truth in their contention *If* we were positively certain that our transient being ends in complete annihilation, in every possible sense of the word ; if we were convinced that the whole human race itself, after its struggles, its evolution, would be some day as if it had never been, that our world would roll through space, a frozen *morgue,* carrying with it the final and net result of all that the life of the race has achieved and striven for, that

> the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
> And like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind,

such a certainty would make a difference. It would not make so great a difference as might at first be imagined, because the will of the race is too strong in us, because we are only to a certain extent individuals It would not extinguish the aspirations and progress of the race any more than it would extinguish the reproductive impulse. Men would still, in spite of themselves, take a keen interest in humanity , they would still be intent on sowing what they cannot hope to reap ; they would still yield to the attraction of the future, the pull of evolution , they would still feel, quite justly, that to be dominated by that race spirit, to surrender one's individual ends to it. is the keenest form of life, the

best life worth living; they would still be ready to sacrifice themselves, to give their life for the intensifying quality which the race ideal alone can impart to it, for truth, for justice, as mothers are ready to give their life for their offspring. It has happened before, and would happen still. Men utterly disbelieving in any form of survival have walked firmly to the stake for truth's sake. And at the present day, in the transitional confusion of thought, there are many men who while holding the above view devote their lives enthusiastically to human progress, to the cause of disinterested truth. But still, I admit that the certainty of complete and universal annihilation would, in the absence of adequate organized training, act as a powerful motive on certain minds, that it would strongly confirm them in the temptation to cry "*Après moi le déluge*," to scramble recklessly for power and material pleasure

But such a certainty would be quite irrational. It can never be a certainty, and we are very far from having any logical justification for entertaining it even as a probability That our present mode of existence, our individual consciousness, depends upon certain conbinations of forces, constituting our physiological organism, and that it must therefore come to an end when that combination is dissolved, does not admit of any practical doubt But it does not follow that that mode of existence which we alone know, is the only form The universe exists though it is not a physiological organism What is the nature of its existence? One thing is absolutely clear, the notion of 'matter,' such as it is currently conceived, such as it has necessarily always been conceived by uncritical man, as a 'dead' thing, is as much a delusion and an absurdity as the grossest and most primitive mythological fable. To say that there is a thing called 'matter' which exists independently of our feeling it, and that the nature of its existence—when we do not feel it—is to be extended, impenetrable, massive, etc, or, in other words, that what there is of it when we do not feel it, consists purely and essentially in 'feltness,' is to contradict oneself flatly in one and the same

breath A more flagrant and direct self-contradiction is not possible We see, we feel the universe , but to consider that we are describing the character of its existence when we say that it is seeable and feelable, that it is big, heavy, hard, is more absolutely *non-sense* than the most grotesque absurdity that can be imputed to any theology *Unfelt feltness* is not a description of any possibility, any more than 'white blackness', it is a thought-muddle of mutually cancelling predicates, a flux of void sounds, not ideas, not even words Of course we vividly conceive matter as feltness, as something extended, hard, visible that is the only way in which we have ever known it, or can ever know it But it needs but the most rudimentary allegiance to the elementary principles of rationality, to recognize that either that something felt must have some mode of existence other than 'feltness,' or that when not felt it does not exist at all

We do know another form of existence, namely our own , not 'dead' existence, but living existence, not feltness but feeling Now there are about a dozen different and independent lines of argument and considerations—which it would take too long to go into here—by which it can be shown that the idea that there are *two* completely and essentially different forms of existence, is, to say the least, a highly improbable and unwarrantable hypothesis It is, for one thing, entirely opposed to every scientific conception, among others to the conception of evolution I am not quite sure whether we are entitled to say that it can be disproved--an hypothesis like that could only be disproved by showing that it necessarily involves a clear self-contradiction—but it is a gratuitous supposition, leading to fatal difficulties, and which carries the burden of proof The hypothesis of special creation can in the same way not be 'disproved,' but it is an overwhelmingly untenable, gratuitous hypothesis, which possesses no claim to consideration by the side of the theory of evolution

There is the highest degree of scientific probability for the simple supposition that what we perceive as

tissue cells, nerve cells, brain cells (which latter do not differ in any essential respect either in character or function from any other amœboid cells) and what on the other hand we know as feeling, as conscious existence, are not *two* things differing totally in their mode of existence, but the same thing of which we are made aware from two entirely different points of view, from the outside, as it were, and from the inside.

We have then two conclusions, the one an absolute certainty, the other a highly probable scientific hypothesis, (1) that the notion of 'matter' as merely dead 'feltness' is an absurdity, absolutely inadmissible in rational thinking, (2) that it is highly probable that the kind of existence which it has independently of our feeling is much more like our own feeling existence than like a 'dead' unfeeling one.

Now we should be careful not to take those two solid rational conclusions—which would be recognized as universally as the motion of the earth, were it not for the peculiar play of prejudices which dominates such questions—for anything more than is really warranted by their rational basis They have been so much abused that rationally minded people have got to distrust them When nowadays a philosopher disproves the notion of 'dead' matter, he will in the majority of cases by and by 'prove' to you the Thirty-nine Articles Or else people who would like to prove the Thirty-nine Articles hail him as a saviour and deliverer and thrust him triumphantly down the throats of the detestable materialists. Consequently many people prefer—quite excusably under the circumstances—to stick to 'materialism' pure and simple, and not to look too curiously into the metaphysics of the notion of matter, than to have anything to do with such hocus-pocus

From the more than legitimate conclusion that the kind of thing of which the universe is really made is much more likely to be akin in nature to our own living mind than to any self-contradictory nonsense like 'dead' feltness, people at once jump to the notion of pantheism, to saying that the universe is a mind resembling our own That supposition differs totally

from the conclusion in question and is not at all warrantable by it. All that we are entitled to say is that our mode of existence represents in a general way more truly what is meant by existence than any other conception we can form, and that certainly 'dead feltness' is not a possible mode of existence. But the conception that the universe is like our own mind is not only unwarrantable, but untenable. Sensation, for instance, could mean nothing in the case of the universe, for the simple reason that there is nothing outside of it to feel. Thought, which is but elaborated sensation, and like it a means to an end, can likewise not be attributed to the universe. No definition by which our own form of mind is commonly characterized could apply to a universal mind.

We are thus faced with two possible alternatives, (1) either the universe (matter) is some lower, more rudimentary form of mind, or (2) it is a higher form of mind. So far as I can see we have no ground whatever to enable us to pronounce in favour of the probability of one hypothesis rather than the other.

I must point out one more consideration. We are in the habit of speaking of the uniformity of nature as 'necessity.' That is quite incorrect. The notion of necessity can properly only be applied to logical implications, such as that a thing cannot at the same time be and not be, that two and two make four, which, in spite of what J. S. Mill says, would hold good in *any* universe. But there is no necessity whatever why a stone should fall to the ground. The fact that a given cause is always followed by a given effect and that the sequence holds good throughout all eternity does not make it one whit more 'necessary.' For aught that we know uniform sequence might be a form of uniform volition.

I have been obliged to slip into this metaphysical digression because it was necessary in order to show that the notion that the dissolution of our individuality, that is, the redistribution of the indestructible energy of which we are composed, necessarily means that we have no permanent stake in the universe, is not, and never can become a rational certainty. And therefore

the progress and development of rational thought, the diffusion of its method, the confidence in its authority, can never make for nihilism, and the outlook of nihilism can never be that of a humanity conscious of its allegiance to the sole valid foundations of its knowledge and beliefs.

IV

MORALS ON THE MARCH

To-day, with the Mene Tekel Upharsin of coming change blazing upon every wall, as of old in just such a groaning, labouring world, the old remedies are pressed upon us—the cultivation of personal virtues, self-renouncement, 'Reform yourselves and the world will be reformed.'

It is precisely to such remedies, to the diverting of attention from the essential conditions and requirements of the human social organism, to intellectually easier and more slothful moral palliatives, to personal virtues protectively cultivated and emphasized to the neglect and exclusion of rational effort and will to justice, that those very failures are due which now so sternly call us to account It is not by any complacent individualistic self-cultivation, it is not by abnegations and renouncements, and ascetic ecstasies, that whatsoever progress has been effected in our social order was brought about, but by hard thinking and devising, by fearless facing the foundations of wrong, and by resisting it It is not by the reformation of the individual, but by the reformation of the world's thought, of the medium, mental and material in which man develops, of the conditions of his life and the quality of his thought, that the

iniquity which filled the world of our forefathers, the flagitious perversity of their current moral judgments have grown inconceivably fabulous 'Reform yourselves'?, it would be considerably truer to say—'Reform the world and your own reform will take care of itself' Men are the product of the kind of world they live in, of the kind of world which it in fact is, of the relations which actually obtain in it between man and man, and of the ideas and values which correspond to that actual world It is public and unacknowledged immorality, not private morality which is important And moral progress does not consist in conformity with the ethical ideals of the age, but in the detection of the immorality of those ideals Personal virtue is the most admirable thing in the world, but the morality of the world has nevertheless not been advanced by personal virtue, but by changed conditions brought about by the force of rational criticism enlisted in the conflicts of human interests

And our age which is witnessing the dissolution of all the traditional sanctions of ethics, which tears without awe or scruple the veil from every sentiment and convention, which questions with unprecedented temerity the very principle of good and evil, this sceptical, iconoclastic age, has not only given more practical effect, more current realization to those ideals of temperance and compassion which previous ages dreamed of and preached, this emancipated, sacrilegious age is doing more, it is carrying those ideals higher, it is creating new ones, it is witnessing the development of a larger and truer conception of ethics, evolving a loftier morality And it is doing so in no formal, speculative manner, not by way of theoretical construction of new codes, but as the living reflection in its feeling and sentiment of the ideas which feed and fill its mental atmosphere

The foremost factor in that development is precisely the perception of that human evolution which we have been considering As we have noted, that perception of the life of the human race as a ceaseless growth rising

from animality and savagery to our present state, impelled onward by an irresistible natural power, ruled by definite and indeflectible laws which nothing can evade and which can be relied upon to operate in the future as in the past as inevitably as the law which governs the course of the planets, is a new conception. There has been nothing like it, as a generally diffused belief, in the world before There have been Utopias ; but a Utopia is but a wistful dream of stagnant perfection There have been conceptions of national millenniums associated with the Messianic ideas of the Jews, or with the Roman Empire in the Augustan age , but all such ideas differ totally from that of progress regarded and recognized as a natural law The process of inevitable growth which constitutes the life of the human race, which has created it, fashioned it, raised it to its present powers, overcome seemingly insuperable obstacles, turned them to its own advantage, which daily leaves the past behind, and throws open new futures, which can only cease with the extinction of the human spirit, that conception is a revelation of to-day

And as that revelation becomes clearer, fuller and more familiar to our thoughts, the fact is ever more clearly impressed upon us, individuals, that we are particles of that great stream, moments in that great process. Our thoughts, our feelings, our desires, our joys and sorrows, our interests, our aims, our entire being is the slowly accumulated product of all the generations of the past, our life is the fruit of millions of lives, of countless efforts, aspirations and struggles We are not isolated entities, but a parcel of human existence , our 'self' is the resultant of all the past. Our individuality is an illusion It is but a resultant and component of the larger life of the race, which moves onward impelled by the same spirit, the same desires which move us. Our thoughts are not our thoughts, the remotest past has gone to the building of them. The length of our individual tether, our capacity for going maybe a little beyond the expressed thought of the age, is itself determined by the stage

of evolution which we happen to have reached Our very pleasures, even what we call our egoistic feelings and tastes, are the expression of the life of the race The individual cannot present a single feature which is not the direct outcome of the social organism in which he and his ancestors have lived. We are nothing apart from humanity.

In attacks of world-weariness it is common for passionate and sensitive natures to be filled with a feeling of boundless disgust for the human world about them, its ugliness, its vulgarity, its shams, its falsehoods, its ignorance, its injustice, its brutality, their souls are racked by the seeming hopelessness of its prejudices and coarse instincts; they shrink from the besmirching contact of the "barbarians, philistines, populace" with which it is peopled; they are sickened by the exultant triumph of crass ignorance, imposture, and respectable infamy They long to fly from that ugly human world, to seek refuge in solitude, in the midst of nature, on the majestic heights of the uncontaminated mountains, there to fill themselves with the vitalizing and sublime influences of natural beauty, to possess their thought-world in freedom, unsullied and untroubled by the meanness and degradation of the world of man But they do not know, or do not reflect that those very aspirations, those soaring ideals, those high sentiments, those impulses and delights of the mind, that very sensitiveness to the faults about them and to the exalted impressions of nature, that world of thought and ideals in which they long to dwell alone, are the child and product of that same human world from which they recoil in horror and contempt as from a thing unclean It is in such a world that the substance of their souls was conceived and born, there that it was created, it is that humanity with all its faults and passions which has through its daily life of strifes and wrestlings brought to being that spirit which lifts them upwards, it is that humanity which has endowed them with the sublime seeing and conquering mind, and the common life of humanity through millions of years immeasurably darker, more horrible and more ugly than the world which surrounds

them, has fashioned every one of those thoughts and feelings in which they would proudly withdraw themselves.

And as we are but the resultant of all past generations, so too are we the makers of the future evolution of the race; as the function of the past was to make us what we are, so the future is dependent upon our being and doing

The great riddle of existence, the great objective universe which encompasses us, its nature and meaning, will probably remain for ever unknown to us. But we are beginning to perceive that that impossible knowledge is not so essential as we had been wont to believe Of one thing we may be perfectly certain. if we knew the word of the enigma, we could not know more certainly than we do now that our part in the great cosmos is wholly contained within the life and destiny of our race. We can be no less certain now, than we should be if the last veil of the mystery were torn open, that our task, our function, our duty is with the human race, that we are not concerned with altering the courses of the stars or kindling the brooding fires of the nebula, but with building the human world, with making it better, greater, with fulfilling the law of untiring effort and ceaseless improvement which governs the entire process of that racial life, of which ours is a part and parcel.

How far and in what sense our being is transient or permanent, how much is momentary, how much imperishable in the combination of universal and indestructible forces which we call our 'self,' does not fundamentally affect the issue The thing that flows through us, the thing we are, has its source in the untold receding ages, and will flow on We are it, it is us Whether or not the exact mode of our 'individuality's' relation to that unbroken stream is such as would satisfy our wishes, could we apprehend it, the fact remains that we cannot wish, think, act outside the current of that stream of which we are a portion If we have any interest, if we have any aspiration, if we have any permanent stake in the universe, they are

bound up with the aspirations, the growth, the destinies of our race.

If that be so, then the ideal of altruism which has hitherto been assumed to be the obvious *ne plus ultra* of morality is but a partial and incomplete one Our relation to the life of the race is not confined, as that ideal supposes, to the present generation, to those of our fellow-beings with whom we are brought into actual contact, but extends to generations yet unborn, to the entire future of humanity, is above all and essentially related to the future Our relation to our contemporaries constitutes only a small portion of our ethical relation , our contribution to the destiny which the race is fulfilling, our part in the great process which it is accomplishing implies a far larger altruism The law by which that great natural process is actually governed only takes account of the existing generation as a stepping-stone to future evolution , that evolution is the all-important object to which all others are subordinate, the present is of no significance except as the seed, the determinant of what is to come , the present is constantly being sacrificed to the future, each successive moment is subservient to the process of which it is but a transient phase

That is the standard of valuation actually current in the natural law which in fact governs the process of human destiny If the conscious principles of human action and the standards by which we estimate it are to be founded in the reality of actual facts, if they are to be something more than an artificial and arbitrary convention, if they are to be in harmony with the laws which, irrespectively of our opinions and predilections govern the course of human affairs, if the principles and standards are not to be in direct and futile opposition to them, it is in terms of those laws that all our ethical judgments and estimates must be formulated Good and evil, right and wrong, must be measured and understood with reference to the laws from which the notions actually derive their ultimate significance The natural process which governs the course of human life stamps human acts and achievements with certain

definite values, they are real, natural values, all others are artificial and arbitrary, whether we like it or not. In the natural scale that action is good which contributes to the process of human development, that act is evil which tends to impede, retard, oppose that process, that individual life is well deserving which is in the direct line of that evolution, that is futile which lies outside the course of its advance, that is condemned which endeavours to oppose the current That is the natural, the absolute and actual standard of moral values. Nature does not value the most saintly and charitable life which brings no contribution to human growth as much as a single act which permanently promotes the evolution of the race In the book of Nature's recording angel more is set down to the credit of Gutenberg and of Rousseau than to St Francis of Assisi The only measure of worth of which Nature takes any account—by perpetuating it—is the contribution offered towards the building up of a higher humanity

As the true relation of human individuality becomes apprehended, as we come to realize the nature of the great process that made us, of which our life is a product and a parcel, that process of humanity-making, the most wonderful and sublime within our ken, it is hard to escape the wish that our life shall be indeed a particle of that great stream, not merely as a passive product, but in howsoever infinitesimal a degree as an active factor also, animated by the same impulse which made us what we are and which will bring forth new humanities We cannot but feel a sense of obligation to contribute something towards that growth of which our being is the fruit, we cannot but be at one with the exsurgent spirit which leads the destinies of the race A new ethical sense, the true and natural ethical spirit whose vaguely conscious operation has created mankind, is inevitably developing To be with the forces of human growth, to be truly a living part, and not a mere dead excretion, of the creative impulse of the race, that is the obligation which, if we have indeed apprehended our real relation, is inevitably laid upon us.

PART IV

PREFACE TO UTOPIA

CHAPTER I

MISOLOGY

By that detached, inexperienced judge, an extra-terrestrial observer of this world, who saw to what prodigious ascension that attuning virtue of thought to universal actions had lifted the sons of earth, it would be supposed as a thing of course that its talisman, the Palladium of such proud power, would in the sentiment of the human race be hedged with something of idolatrous veneration. pride of intellect would seem at the least pardonable, rational thought, its authority, transgressed against though it might be by human infirmity, would, he could not but assume, be, in theory, at least, reverently deferred to and held inviolable. What a contrast the actual attitude of mankind presents! It is the paradox of human thought that man has ever looked askance upon that very power by virtue of which he has wrought his portents, to which he owes all. The sentiment with which he has commonly regarded it has been, not one of reverence and pride, but, on the contrary, of deep distrust, of disparagement, of positive antagonism, nay, of fierce open hostility Throughout the course of his career, rising to unimagined heights by means of it, he has never ceased to brand its name, to revile it and scorn it, to belittle it, to point to it in scorn as to a treacherous enemy, a thing unclean. to oppose it, and use his utmost endeavour to stifle its voice At this late hour to represent it, as has here been done, as the supreme organ of his life and growth, is not a simple truistic statement, but one to be advanced with apologetic delicacy. To express contempt for rationality of thought is, on the other hand, the unfailing cue to popular applause.

Not popular clamour only or the voice of Ialdaboth denounces reason as 'pride of intellect,' and pleads

for the expediency, the utility, the beauty of lies, but laborious philosophers addicted to its subtlest exercise vie in impeaching and discrediting reason, in showing by the production of cogent reasons that it is unreasonable to be reasonable, in performing the Munchausen-like feat of lifting themselves out of the bed of their dogmatic slumbers by their own hair, of discrediting rational thought by means of rational criticism; and in delighting us with the discovery that no truth has ever been discovered, but merely made and manufactured; Columbus having thus manufactured America, and Le Verrier created the planet Uranus.

From the philosophers' caves to the market-place the echoes of learned misology are propagated in joyful repercussion. And every occasion and pretext is eagerly embraced to set some other source of judgment and guidance, and conduct, less exacting, more pliable to our wishes, and invested with the glamour of mystery and unintelligibility, in the place of the power which made man and by which he rules. Intuition, inspiration, instinct, divination, subliminal consciousness, illative sense, direct knowledge, pragmatism, under countless and various names and descriptions, with the solemnity of the dogmatist, and with the flippancy of the wit, with the assertiveness of ignorance, and with academic apparatus, in the most opposite ways, and in the name of the most conflicting opinions, as inquisitor or as scientist, as tyrant or as revolutionary, man has pursued his quest for *substitutes for rational thought*. Most pathetic sight of all, the very soldiers who are fighting the War of Liberation of Humanity, combating unreason and injustice, are at one with the obscurantist in giving expression to their disdain for 'mere rationality,' 'logic grinding,' 'intellectualism,' 'the fetish of consistency.'

Reason, it has been preposterously demonstrated, is 'fallible.' That, of course, is not so. Reason is not fallible, reason is infallible. There is no instance of the failure of rational thought. There is a rueful record of the disastrous failures, wreck, ruin incomputable, desolation, agony, and misery due to irrational thoughts, to substitutes for reason. The chief task of rational

thought has been to rescue man from the overwhelming disasters brought about by those substitutes.

The extravagant spectacle of his incongruous attitude of persistent suicide—as if a race of Aristophanic birds should inveigh against the power of flight, or a society of electrical engineers devote their evenings to expressing their scorn of the notorious uselessness of electricity—becomes less paradoxical when we reflect that irrational thought is the necessary expression of all established order which depends for its continuance on the prevention of fatal change, evolution, progress So that rational thought is the eternal enemy, and as such must, according to all rules of war, be discredited, vilified, and contemned

The irrational power-thought with which every issue is fenced about against reason, is not, as we are led to suppose, an infirmity of prejudice with which 'human nature' is inevitably afflicted, it is the natural means of defence of all the powers interested in clinging for their existence to established conceptions, amid the perpetual menace of the forces which are destructive of lies. It is an artifact. And there is in the nature of things no ground whatever why it should not be eliminated from the world. People are not born with prejudices, they are taught them. And the artificial deformation of men's minds is no more necessary and unavoidable than is that of Chinese ladies' feet. There is nothing more visionary in the conception of a world without prejudice than in that of a world without typhoid or small-pox. It is conceivable that a stop might be put to the teaching of prejudice

Power-thought is an inevitable disease of power, and power in some form, power of guidance, leadership, talent is necessary, desirable, precious, indispensable Yes, but that beneficent power is not the sort of power that either naturally feeds or thrives on pudding *Natural* inequality, aristocracies of talent, of wisdom, of true insight, let us by all means pray for; let us have leaders. But to offer high wages for leadership is precisely the way *not* to get it. Given decent fullness of life to all, it is your true leader that can best dispense with high wages The

true difficulty and problem of differentiation of function in the human world, is not so much to allot leadership as to allot the dirty work. Under rational conditions of equal opportunities, your leader will soon appear when you cease advertising for him, connecting his function by an obsessing atavism with the image of a Persian satrap To preserve human beings from becoming brutes when put to the dirty work of the world, that is the greater difficulty. To them the high wages. Power dissociated from pudding will no longer necessarily breed pestilence and infection.

A process out of which the cure of power-thought may conceivably evolve, should not be overlooked. Power-thought has, of course, under pressure and compulsion become liberalized, it has of necessity had to undergo transformation at the point of the bayonets of rational thought. It is less homicidal than it once was The reactionary of to-day, with the views and conduct he is compelled to adopt, or to pretend to adopt, would a hundred years ago have been hanged and quartered as a raving revolutionary. The animal instincts of self-preservation are full of craft, produce protective colorations and mimicries. Reaction speaks in the name of liberal ideas, of freedom, of progress. Our Tories are the loudest advocates of 'reform,' our obscurantists of 'education,' of 'enlightenment.' More, the self-protective instinct has learned by experience; it has learned better than to wait stupidly to have reform thrust upon it by revolt It has learned to meet it half-way when inevitable, to forestall it, to turn reformer and avoid the worst. All that is but self-protective mimicry and is taken for what it is worth. But, all the same, it comes to this, that the sight of power-interest is compelled to take a longer view, its sight is lengthening. Suppose a further lengthening, may not truth, may not justice loom at last into view as its own ultimate interest? May Ialdaboth not make the discovery that his power-thought, for all its cunning, animal, self-preservative instinct, has not only desolated and ruined humanity, but likewise *himself*?

CHAPTER II

THE HOPEFULNESS OF PESSIMISM

SUCH as it stands to-day reared by his mind's powers, the World of Man is at once the most venerable and wondrous fact in the universe and a thing to make angels weep, a glory and an abomination, an inspiration and a stumbling-block, a thing sacred and vile, sublime and grotesque, a fit object of worship and of contempt, of pride and of shame, of hope and of despair. According as we view it with an eye upon the portent of its growth out of crudest origins, or in the light of the knowledge and ideals that are in us of what it should, could, and ought to be, we have cause to be filled with a religious reverence or with a sense of cynical disgust That optimism and that pessimism colour all our outlooks and estimates.

There is abundant justification for the darkest picture. The powers of evil against which mankind has struggled from earliest times, transformed, docked and diminished though they be, still loom defiant, battling fiercely and astutely. They oppose justice, oppose freedom, oppose reason, oppose truth. As of old they colour and distort the mental world in the sense of their ends and interests. Though a thousand abuses have been swept away, the world swarms with abuses, gross, glaring, patent, and convicted. Despite all the glories of human progress anachronisms and archaisms, superstitions—in the strict etymological sense of the word—dating from every age of savagery and barbarism, violently incongruous with the knowledge and judgment of modern man, pageant arrogantly up and down the earth

The principle of economic heredity dooms the bulk of the race to congenital material and mental degradation.

The principle of the Power-State, possessing immoral interests and standing outside ethical laws, the shibboleths of nationality and military power, have materialized in their logical issue, and convulsed the world in a maelstrom of ruin dwarfing the records of its bloodstained annals. Sexual life is perverted and tortured by notions and institutions founded upon the primitive chattel estimate of woman. Man's intellectual life is chaos. Moloch, as of old, calls for the little ones to come unto it, claims and exercises the right of mental infanticide. Every organized and recognized channel of ideas, press, school, public utterance and opinion, is deliberately fed with falsehood. The entire development of the human mind during its long and glorious progress is sedulously put aside, concealed, suppressed, garrotted, and silenced, so that in an age when, as never yet, man is in possession of the means and data of far-reaching rational thinking, when, as never before, he is in a position to know, to think, to judge, it is virtually impossible for a man to know, think, or judge save by subreptitious personal effort, in opposition and defiance of all established and approved formulas of thought. In its racial, economic, familial, moral, religious, intellectual organization, the entire fabric of existing civilization presents a consistent structure of blunder, of folly, of ignorance, of falsehood, and of iniquity.

The war, with all its monstrous manifestations, which fills our consciousness to-day with distracted bewilderment, is not an accidental cataclysm, a fortuitous phenomenon. All the criminal absurdities, all the hypocrisies, and blasphemies, and falsehoods, all the callousness, all the vertiginous waste and demented destruction of human life, power, wealth, all the bedlam insanity of it all, existed, every one of them, in our pre-war European civilization The war was but the visible avatar, the materialized out-throw of the multitudinous abominations amid which we lived It has but torn the mask.

Yet while we contemplate with unflinching eye that mountain-mass of evil and falsehood, our faith in humanity

and in its destinies, if we have clearly apprehended the course of past development and the forces by which it has been brought about, will stand unshaken Such as it is, this sore-smitten world does yet surpass every preceding phase in the upward struggle of the race Every one of those abuses, every aspect of that folly, of that iniquity, of that ignorance under the weight of which our present world appears to be irredeemably floundering, represents but the whittled remnant of the incubus which has formerly weighed upon its growth Gross and intolerable, hardy and defiant as every avatar of the powers of darkness appears to-day, it is but the shadow of a tyranny once immeasurably greater It puts a strain on our imagination, we complain, to conceive a world purged from those secular evils, but it is in reality even more difficult to form a duly vivid conception of the conditions, material and mental, of those phases which our world has outgrown And, on the other hand, all evil is to-day, as never before, sharply accentuated by our clearer insight into its absurdity, its iniquity, its obsolescence, its wanton needlessness The time is no more when anachronisms could pass unnoticed as on a Shakespearean or an Addisonian stage. Out-of-date stupidity and iniquity stand out more clearly visible because our consciousness of what is wise and right is infinitely more lucid Never was the contrast between our knowledge, our conscience, and existent fact so strident, never before has there been so clashing an antithesis between man's thought and that upon which rests the orders of his world.

And it is precisely that contrast which is the surest token of the future The world of man is built out of his mind, is the materialized expression thereof, it is by his thought that it has grown into what it is, it is his thought that has gradually cast out evil The realization of man's rational conclusion of what he perceives to be true, of what he perceives to be right, of what he perceives to be just, is as inevitable as the process of the stars The greater the antithesis between man's world and his spirit, the greater the assurance of the future

The war, we were told, threatened the existence and

future of our civilization. But in reality what lies in mortal jeopardy is not civilization, but war. War and all the unmasked forces which have made the war possible, of which the war was the visible embodiment and logical result. In the midst of it the world has never been more eirenic, been more clearly in sight of the passing away of all war barbarisms. And what is true of that representative anachronism is equally true of all others. The powers of darkness and reaction loom most dangerous the nearer the term of their downward course; when existence is imperilled all finer modesties and abstentions are dispensed with, purposes are laid bare and existence is defended with tenfold defiance But inconsistency and incompatibility with the present is but accentuated by all apparent triumphs, and humanity is brought nearer to deliverance.

However impredicable and uncertain the immediate issues, the ultimate issues are certain and inevitable. Delays, adjournments, the victory of reaction, the triumph of folly, the insolence of privilege, the arrogance of confuted lies, ruin, cataclysms, are immaterial in the general course of the natural process. They are but transient accidents, and we know that the evolutionary forces turn accidents and obstacles to profit and account. Destruction involves what is doomed, frees what is deathless. Such has been the invariable result of all the disasters which have seemed to jeopardize the evolution of humanity.

In the light of a clear apprehension of past development, all current scepticisms and cynicisms become negligible. The idiotic cry of 'Utopia' is but foolish gibbering. To any one who has at all adequately realized the significance of the past evolution of mankind, all our halting millennial dreams are by comparison puny and impotent; the retrospective vision of accomplished fact is the most fantastic of all Utopias. Compared to it the tasks which our limited vision can see lying ahead of us are singularly simple.

CHAPTER III

THE CONTROL OF HUMAN EVOLUTION

HUMAN evolution is probably as yet in a comparatively early stage. There is no ground for supposing that it will not attain to phases surpassing the present one as signally as that surpasses even the dimmest human beginnings There is no reason why the standard of development of human faculties and qualities attained by a few individuals whom we call great, should not become the average of the race. That is the ordinary course of evolution , the individual exception becomes the type of the race.

Properly speaking, specific human evolution can scarcely be said to have yet begun The stages through which mankind has passed and those which appear immediately about to follow, are preparatory in character For all the growth of humanity has so far been engaged rather with developing the means of its evolution than with using and applying them The goals which humanity at present envisages are not so much ideals of ripe perfection—which does not exist in any evolutionary process —as a condition of suitable equipment for its free development. The use of the means at the disposal of mankind for the control of the conditions of life is not as yet systematized and organized, hardly are those means recognized, hardly at all distinctly apprehended

The operation of progressive forces has been, speaking in mechanical parlance, inefficient in the extreme. The wastage is colossal. Only an infinitesimal fraction of human power has been applied to the task of development ; the course of the evolutionary process has been choked by self-created obstacles, and by far the larger proportion of the progressive effort has been spent in overcoming them. The abolition of each obsolete sur-

vival means not only an obstacle removed, but the setting free of all the force which had been engaged in struggling against it. Huge sources of power await liberation, incalculable stores of energy lie as yet untapped.

But if all the results of human evolution have hitherto been achieved by means that are only a fraction of those in the power of humanity, which are but in part realized and purposively applied, there is one aspect of that evolution which human effort has as yet done virtually nothing at all to assist and control And that aspect constitutes half the evolutionary process, namely, the transmission of its results from one generation to another.

When progress, reform, reconstruction, are discussed, the scepticism of the more moderate setters-forth of world wisdom usually finds expression in some such comments as the following —

'Those consummations which we all devoutly wish, the casting of anachronisms, absurdities gross and palpable, would be a simple enough matter, would indeed come about automatically, were everybody—well, like you and me, were the majority of human beings amenable to reason, pervious to the obvious, if they were at all capable of the simplest thinking, if they cared at all for any of those things. Clearly there would be no folly if there were no fools But, my dear sir, cast your eyes wherever you please upon the actual crowd of men and women, consider for a moment the concrete individual human beings which make up that aggregate in which you would see the agent of intelligent endeavour, which you etherealize into the germ of an exalted humanity That humanity is the greengrocer round the corner, the haberdasher, the thief, the beadle, that jockey trainer, that lean clerk, that adipose government official wiping the sweat of his pomposity from his brow, that country gentleman with arterio-sclerosis, sodden with squirearchical tradition, those youths whose one dread in the world is the risk of being bored by their own company, whose minds revolve in the orbit of the music-hall, the restaurant, "rugger" and "socker," the ossified Eton-Oxford brain, the sordid dinginess of those suburbans careworn with the

pettiest individual problems, the tragic mankind of our heartrending comic artists, the Phil-May, the George Belcher people, and all the unspeakable dumb, submerged multitude of animality. That is your humanity! Glance at the bookstalls, at their literature, their press; consider the food of their dim mentality What thoughts are theirs? What rational impulse towards even the most trivial platitude of progress can you look to issue thence? What force, save the habitual clap-trap that is appropriately employed, is capable of moving that mass of hopeless inertia?

'I will go further Your "progress" is, whatever you may say, in a great measure illusory Apart from its material aspects it has only effected any essential change, any real evolution in an infinitesimally small percentage of the race. That wider vision, those expanded horizons, that clearer consciousness and conscience, are the heirloom of but a small fraction of the human race, even though it be larger than in past ages, even though it no longer constitutes an esoteric class Though the whole community unconsciously benefits by the conquests of justice and of thought just as it does by the development of material power, still the vast mass of mankind remains to-day, under the external appearance of transforming civilization, at heart much what they have been in the rudest ages, barbarians, as unthinking, as nescient, as mentally helpless, a prey to similar superstitions and formulas, blindly governed by the same unmodified passions, with minds and hearts and lives revolving in the same cramped sphere as the savage and the barbarian, and liable to break out at any time through all their veneers into primitive savagery and barbarism.'

Ruefully must that justification of the 'veneer' view of civilization be admitted We live in a certain phase of human evolution termed 'twentieth-century' which stands for a certain achieved growth of the human mind, its powers, its experience and attitude. But the vast majority do not belong to that phase at all. In the population, high and low, of the present day every phase of human evolution is represented, from the Stone Age onward. The actual men we see about us are not twentieth-century

men at all, but Mousterians, men of the fifteenth century with Master of Arts degrees, Norman chieftains, Tudor men, Victorians. They travel in railways, fly in planes, use telephones, do not settle their family disputes with stone hatchets, do not eat with their fingers; but all that is but 'veneer.' Essentially, in all that really counts as marking their place on the genealogical tree of human evolution, in their mind, in their ideas, they appertain not to this, but to some remote and primitive period. Civilization is, so far as they are concerned, but a material setting, of no more significance than the cut of their clothes.

But what does that fact actually signify and amount to? To this: that the results, the products of human evolution since palæolithic, Tudor, Victorian days have not been transmitted to them; have not been transmitted by the only agency that can perform that function, by the human environment, human organization. That function has been performed partially and imperfectly, or not at all. The Carrier of Evolution upon which they are wholly dependent for their human heredity has transmitted to them railways and policemen, but the actual essentials of the accomplished evolution it has entirely failed to transmit. It is no incurable 'human nature' that is at fault, no irredeemable stupidity or folly, but the mechanism of human evolution. It is not their protoplasm or their blood that is to blame if they are troglodytes or barbarians; they cannot be anything else but for the handing down by human organization of the growth of humanity since troglodytism and barbarism. Human purpose has, as a matter of fact, never yet so much as bethought itself of exercising any control over that function; no steps have been taken by the human race to transmit its evolution. Mankind has never deliberately organized its reproductive mechanism.

We have, it is true, something spoken of, and considerably spoken of, as 'education.' But it is scarcely possible to contemplate it seriously as a rational endeavour to discharge the above-named function. So grossly ludicrous, so fantastically archaic is it, that one can hardly employ the same term to designate it and

an attempt to organize the transmission of human evolutionary products. There is scarcely anything in common between that which at the present day goes by the name of education, and the actual conquests and achievements of the human mind. It seems, on the contrary, to be the deliberate aim of our pedagogy to wipe out, to conceal, bury, and render inaccessible all that the human mind has acquired of power and knowledge since the fourteenth century, and to secure its victims against any danger of acquiring it. Amid all surviving anachronisms it would be difficult to point to one which has remained so completely primitive and rudimentary as our so-called education, or to a subject concerning which even our more advanced conceptions and ideals have so generally failed to rise above the level of our rudimentary practice.

What is termed education is founded upon the patriarchal notion of the sacred right of the father to do as he pleases with the mind of the child who is heir to his property. As the father in reality has neither the knowledge, nor the means or the power to train the child's mind, any more than he has any right to control the evolution of the race, the child is sent to school. The school is more or less expensive according to the means, ambition or vanity of the parent. All our schools are derived by very direct and undisturbed filiation from the monastery schools established in the darkest ages of Europe for the manufacture of priests. They teach the same subjects, by the same methods, as were taught in the *quadrivium* in vogue when the human mind reached its lowest level of degradation; to those are added the subjects predilected by the humanists of the so-called Renaissance who gave a baleful twist to the development of modern Europe.

Of those subjects the most important are Latin, the language of the Roman Church, and Greek, that of the Renaissance humanists; thus the youth of the twentieth century is said to be provided with the key wherewith 'to unlock the wisdom of the ancients.' The teaching is conducted by priests, or under the supervision of priests. Subjects, methods, and teachers are the same as in the

fifteenth century and by no means up to the level of even the best fifteenth-century mentality. Fifteenth-century knowledge is not the means to twentieth-century thought.

As to the education supplied to the 'lower classes,' while by the omission of some of the traditions of the church schools it is more real and healthier in tone, so far as it goes, than that of the expensive schools, it is so rudimentary as scarcely to amount to more than mere literacy, providing the pupil with sufficient letters to read shilling shockers (instead of six-shilling ones, like his more fortunate brother brought up on Vergil and Xenophon), and sufficient figuring to shop or cheat The transmission of the products of mankind's mental evolution takes place to-day in spite of any system of 'education,' in direct conflict with it, by resolute individual discarding of its influence, almost solely through the broad-scattering of the printed page

It is unnecessary to dwell here upon an unspeakable absurdity so gross that it has become a recognized scandal currently commented upon It may, however, not be out of place to point out that much of the criticism directed against it stultifies itself and lends a handle to the guardians of tradition, by setting up in opposition to its hieratic unrealities the ideal of a 'utilitarian education.'

It is reasonable and right that every man should with all available knowledge and training be fitted for the particular work he is intended to perform, but that is not the first object of education It is not in the proper sense education at all The carpenter should be trained in carpentering, the doctor in medical science, the farmer in agriculture But a man besides being a carpenter, a doctor, or a farmer, is first and foremost a man. In addition to carpentering, or doctoring, or farming, in addition to having to deal with the problems of materials and construction, or of pathology, or of the chemistry of soils, he is confronted with the problems of life, with the problems of the living world In addition to being a working member in the division of the world's labour, he is a living mind. He is the

heir of all the ages, of the complex organism of humanity through which the evolutionary process is moving; he has a right to his human inheritance, to the development of his powers to the full extent which that inheritance makes possible He is the builder of the future and contributes as a citizen of humanity in his measure to its growth. Education is the imparting to every being of the means and methods of rational thought

Any adequate discussion of what such an organized transmission of human power to the rising generation would entail, would be out of proportion with our present purpose. I must leave the reader to conceive a real system of education which shall not be a subordinate side-track of human organization, but its chiefest, paramount sphere of action and endeavour, in which the growth of the child and the development of his mind shall take place, as the concern of the whole race, amid all the influences of healthfulness and beauty that human resource can devise, in which the schools shall be the temples, the palaces, the treasure-houses of the race, adorned with all that human art and wealth can lovingly lavish of beautiful and precious, in which the child shall be disciplined to health, to work, and to thought, in which he shall be fitted with utmost efficiency for his appointed work, but shall first and foremost be fitted to be a man and a citizen of humanity, in which the free development of his powers and judgment shall not be a drudgery, but a joy, in which his mind shall be taught and furnished with the data of competency through every avenue of the senses, by his life and surroundings, by pictorial art, collections, the theatre, the cinematograph, by music, by travel, by undogmatic spoken word, and unlimited access to books, in which he shall acquire by daily contact a first-hand acquaintance with most subjects and knowledge of some, and, while his mind shall be trained in essentials and representative spheres, it shall not remain a stranger in any, in which he may learn Greek prosody by all means if he be so minded, or it bears upon his life-work, but shall in any case learn the beauty of the Greek spirit and its freedom, and something of the

spirit and achievement of all the ages to which he is the heir, what they have done for him, what they have bequeathed to his life; in which he shall learn something of the world he lives in, behold its infinite greatness through the telescope, and its minute perfection through the microscope, learn something of what is known of life and its functions, behold the evolution of its forms; of which a period of travel and an exchange with the children of other countries shall be a part, and he shall learn Greek, if he chooses, in Greece, and French in France; in which representatives of all types of thought and opinion shall be free to place their interpretations before him, when he is old enough, and he shall be free to choose, in which his powers shall be exercised and tested by expression, debate, and discussion among his fellow-learners, and the debating-room shall be the examination hall, leading by continuous stages to the councils of citizens and of nations, in which, while he shall be provided for, fed, clothed and cared for on princely scale by the community of which he is the precious heir, he shall from the first contribute his labour and take his share of work, shall be trained to discipline and endurance, as well as to joy and power; in which work and the training of body and mind shall go hand in hand, and that training shall not end with any period of childhood, but shall be available and rendered desirable through life, in which the pupil shall become accustomed to the meanest task and to the highest thought, in which the only meaning of human equality shall be realized—equal opportunity of free development to all

To forecast the future growth of that human world, so rich as yet—for all our bruised optimisms and defeated moods—in potentialities and expatiating sap, is beside our present scope Our concern has been to trace that growth in the past and to track through its gnarled and ragged form the mounting forces which have pushed, after all, ever lightward, creative in suffering and in joy Regarding those emancipations and

renewals for which the world is loudly crying, and for which it appears ripe—for the discordance of its thoughts with the bonds of its structure has reached a pitch of incompatibility beyond which nothing short of transformation appears possible—one clear and emphatic lesson stands out above all others from our survey Like every step of moment in past development, the successful consummation of present and coming efforts is conditional upon the mental equipment of humanity In the phase which its evolutionary aims have reached the first indispensable reform which must precede or accompany all others, if they are to be aught but stages in the long process of trial and failure, is an organized effort to provide for the handing down with untampering honesty the full measure of those powers which man has acquired, and to transmit them to the race Failing such a provision troglodytism and mediævalism must necessarily continue with us, and all attempts to shake off the dead hand of unburied evil must remain essentially ineffectual, and by such a provision alone more than half the goals to which humanity is distractedly reaching out will *ipso facto* have been attained

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